

Tough stance from Kremlin as rival supporters gather in Moscow for Congress

Red Square prepared for Yeltsin battle

From Mary Dejevsky and Bruce Clark in Moscow

PERESTROIKA appeared to be approaching its high noon yesterday as Moscow steeled itself for a double confrontation — on the streets and in the Kremlin.

The central Soviet authorities adopted a tough stance as the rival politicians of the Soviet Union and Russia gathered to prepare for today's extraordinary meeting of the Russian Federation's Congress of People's Deputies and radicals planned today's demonstration in support of Boris Yeltsin, the federation's leader.

Extra police were deployed on the city streets and Red Square was barricaded. The congress of more than 1,000 elected deputies from all over the Russian Federation is the only body with the authority to elect and remove the republic's leader. Supporters of Mr Yeltsin fear that hardline Communists are conspiring to oust him.

The central Soviet authorities spent much of the day

trying to prevent the rally, which is expected to attract hundreds of thousands of people, by a series of political moves. Gennadi Yanyayev, the Soviet vice-president, summoned leading radicals to warn them not to go ahead with the demonstration. At the same time, however, the authorities appeared to be preparing to use force if necessary.

Security was stepped up as police patrolled the streets in groups of three and Manezh Square, the area beside the Kremlin where the reformists are planning to hold their demonstration, was also cordoned off.

There were widespread rumours that convoys of armoured personnel carriers and other military vehicles had been brought into Moscow during the past few days, but Ivan Shilov, the new chief of the city police, said no armoured vehicles would be used. Lorries carrying troops and military jeeps were much in evidence around the city.

The planned demonstration has been banned both by the Soviet parliament and the central Soviet government. The city council, which is dominated by reformists, has, however, defied both orders and given the event its approval. The praesidium (standing committee) of the Russian parliament has also opposed the ban and questioned whether such a move is constitutional.

Mr Yanyayev reminded the leaders of the city council about the government's three-week ban on demonstrations and marches. An official report said he urged them to remember their responsibilities and to "display common sense, consideration and an awareness of the acuteness of the current situation in order to ensure law and order in the capital".

In a clear demonstration of the Kremlin's determination to stand firm, the meeting was also attended by Vladimir Kryuchkov, the head of the KGB, and by Boris Pugo, the interior minister. Both have been associated with the campaign to curb crime and impose social discipline that was initiated at the end of last year and the Moscow police have now been placed under



Testing time: Soviet militiamen on patrol in Red Square yesterday after the area had been blocked off in anticipation that a banned pro-Yeltsin rally will take place today

Censure match ends in a draw

By Robin Oakley
POLITICAL EDITOR

JOHN Major and Neil Kinnock yesterday fought a high-scoring draw in the Commons censure debate, during which the prime minister promised that inflation would fall rapidly over the next two months and would be below 4 per cent by the end of the year.

Mr Kinnock gave one of his best Commons performances, confident, jokey and relaxed as he tormented the government over its climbdown on the poll tax. It could not all be blamed on Mrs Thatcher, he said. Most of the present cabinet had gone along with the community charge. "Either they were all innocent but gullible and did not know the truth about the poll tax. Or, the more likely conclusion, they did know the truth but a mixture of deference and ambition made dishonest men of them."

Tory MPs sat silent and uncomfortable for much of Mr Kinnock's speech. But the prime minister, in a combative reply, said the Opposition front bench wriggling as he sought answers to questions about how Labour would pay for its own local government finance plans. Tory MPs, convinced that he had come through his first crucial test in adversity, stood and waved their order papers at the end with far more enthusiasm than could have been produced by whips' orchestration.

In a confrontation that was more about backbench morale than policy detail both leaders acquitted themselves well. Mr Kinnock broke the hoodoo that has dogged him on big Commons occasions and the prime minister showed that he could carry the fight to the enemy. But both were better at attacking the failings of the other side than answering any points of detail themselves.

Mr Kinnock, asking Mr Major to clear up several points. Would there be a register for the new local tax? Who would have legal liability for paying it? Would he be prepared to accept a 4 per cent inflation target?

Continued on page 24, col 4

Olympics open to South Africa

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

SOUTH Africa was yesterday readmitted to the Olympic Games after a 30 year absence, provided it can satisfy conditions laid down by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) within 180 days.

If South Africa complies, the country could field a team in next year's Olympic Games in Barcelona, and be eligible for the World Athletics Championships in Tokyo this August, the African Games in Cairo in September, and the Winter Olympics in Albertville.

The conditions are: the abolition of apartheid laws, the unification of sports bodies on a non-racial basis, and the normalisation of relations with sports bodies elsewhere in Africa. To do this will involve some sensitive political stroke play at national and sporting level, but the IOC, which will review the situation in Birmingham in June, hopes its gesture will be regarded as too generous to be squandered.

The granting of even such temporary recognition, for the first time since the South African Olympic Committee was suspended in 1970, means that South Africa is now eligible for financial aid from the IOC solidarity fund, for assistance from the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa, and for internal coaching and administrative assistance.

In response to this change in the international political climate South Africa has set up an Interim National Olympic Committee of South Africa (INOCOSA), and, perhaps vitally, Nelson Mandela yesterday said he was willing to support fully the actions and objectives of INOCOSA.

This conditional recognition will be regarded as a green light for the International Amateur Athletic Federation, and Fifa, football's international governing body, to accept South Africa's return to their federations, each in conjunction with the respective African confederation of athletics and football.

Continued on page 15, col 1

Gulf victory turns bitter for Bush

President Bush has been caught in the crossfire as General Schwarzkopf snipes at the decision to order a ceasefire, Peter Stothard reports

Postwar harmony between politicians and generals ended in Washington with General Norman Schwarzkopf's claim that President Bush had overruled his advice to "annihilate" Iraqi forces in Kuwait, and the defence secretary, Richard Cheney, retorting that the general had made "no objection" to the ceasefire on February 28.

General Schwarzkopf told David Frost that his recommendation had been "to continue the march. We had them in a rout and we could have continued to wreak great destruction on them. We could have completely closed the door and made it a battle of annihilation."

"But Bush made the decision that we should stop at a given time," he said, in comments that are a vivid support for the view — signalled at the time of the February 28 ceasefire — by White House officials — that the decision to end the Gulf war was political rather than military. The White House

reaction to the revelations from America's national war hero was one of nervousness. "He seems to be taking his cue from Douglas MacArthur," said one aide, recalling the political independence of the victor of the Pacific war.

Mr Cheney said that the decision "was co-ordinated with, and concurred in, by Schwarzkopf, who raised no objection to terminating hostilities."

The general's remarks were seen as deliberately distancing himself from the messy aftermath of the victory in Kuwait. On the same night that President Saddam Hussein's Republican Guard was reported to be strafing civilians from the air within easy reach of the halted American troops, General Schwarzkopf said that "there were obviously a lot of people who escaped who wouldn't have escaped if the decision had not been made to stop when we were. My recommendation," he

Continued on page 24, col 1

Kurds aim to attack last bastion in north

By OUR FOREIGN STAFF

AS KURDISH rebels yesterday announced an offensive against President Saddam Hussein's last stronghold in northern Iraq, the United Nations Security Council was considering terms that would allow the regime to use warplanes to bomb the Kurds.

The loophole in the UN draft emerged after the five permanent members — America, Britain, France, the Soviet Union and China — submitted their ceasefire resolution to the rest of the Security Council. The Americans have twice shot down Iraqi fixed-wing planes since the end of the

allied offensive on the ground that their use against Kurds and the Shia resistance in southern Iraq violated the ceasefire. Washington said this week that Iraqi helicopter gunships attacking the rebels would not be shot down.

The Kurdish fighters said yesterday that they were advancing on Mosul, which borders the Kurdish region. They said that they planned to support a rising inside Iraq's third city. But Baghdad denied that the Kurds and the Shia fighters had won any ground.

Continued on page 11, col 1

Lamont turns down curb on mortgages

By ANATOLE KALETSKY

THE Chancellor yesterday dismissed the Bank of England's suggestions that direct controls on mortgage lending could play a role in the government's strategy against inflation.

Norman Lamont also implied that the position of sterling was not the main constraint on the government's interest rate policy at present, suggesting that interest rates were now being kept high because of domestic monetary and inflation concerns. Appearing before the Commons Treasury and Civil Service Committee, Mr

Lamont said that direct controls on bank and building society lending would be inequitable and ineffective. The Chancellor was commenting on remarks by Robin Leigh-Pemberton, the governor of the Bank of England, that he was "attracted" to the idea of direct controls.

Controls on mortgage lending were advocated by some economists during the house price boom of 1987-89 and the idea has been taken up by the Labour Party as an alternative to high interest rates.

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GOOD WRITING IN THE TIMES

HEALTH

Dr Thomas Sutherland explains why Easter brides (among others) find panic attacks mean more than mere sweat Page 13

POLITICS

Mary Dejevsky reports from Moscow on hopes (and fears) of an early end to Boris Yeltsin's career in politics Page 8

POWER

Michael Rayson on the Foreign Office dividend after the departure from Downing Street of the redoubtable Sir Charles Powell Page 16

INSIDE

Kroll cash link

At least six of 32 Iraqi-controlled companies in Britain, being investigated by Kroll Associates, the Wall Street detective agency hired by the Kuwaiti government, can be traced back to a Baghdad-based holding company, al-Arabi Trading... Page 25

GCSE decision

Bad spelling and incorrect grammar will be penalised in GCSE papers this summer after all following a compromise agreed between Kenneth Clarke, the education secretary, and his examination advisers... Page 2

Milan banned

AC Milan have been banned from European football competitions for one season after walking off the pitch during their quarter-final tie in Marseille... Page 44

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Bags of mail winging their way to Box 777

By CRAIG SETON

PO BOX 777, Ashbourne, Derbyshire, the address of a facilities office and warehouse unit on a nondescript industrial estate, is probably the country's best known box number since British Airways announced that it is to give away 50,000 return tickets to anywhere.

And it is there amid strict security that British entries for the promotion are being opened, stored and recorded on computer. By yesterday, six days after the competition started, 750,000 envelopes had arrived. PO Box 777 is the unmarked head office of Data Entry International, a company specialising in data programming and coupon handling.

The competition is expected to be one of the biggest the company has handled and it has taken on 60 temporary staff to open by hand the entries which arrive by the vanload from the nearby sorting

office. Knives and letter openers at the ready, the temporary staff, sitting at lines of trestle tables, are opening 175,000-200,000 envelopes a day and sorting them into batches of 100. The number each person opens is counted as they are on piece-work. Coupons are taken to a computer room with 30 terminals where 120 operators, working in two shifts, record all the details.

Entries will go into a draw to be made in London on Sunday. Of the 50,000 tickets, half will go to British entrants. Winners will be notified and will travel to a destination of their choice on St George's Day. British Airways estimates that as many as five million people will enter the draw.

John Reid, group managing director of Data Entry International, was, like British Airways staff involved in the scheme, sworn to secrecy before the

public announcement. "We signed confidentiality agreements that were so tight I could not even tell my wife or my son. We ran an advertisement for casual staff in the local paper, but could not divulge the work they would be doing. The post offices at Derby and Ashbourne have had to take on additional staff, but we were able to give them some pre-warning." The company will be working through Good Friday and Easter Saturday sorting through the final entries ready to send them to London in a security vehicle.

Some people have been so anxious to enter the competition that they have not bothered to cut out the coupons, but sent in the whole double-page newspaper advertisements placed by the airline. One entry measuring over 2 ft carried the message: "World's biggest envelope — well, almost."

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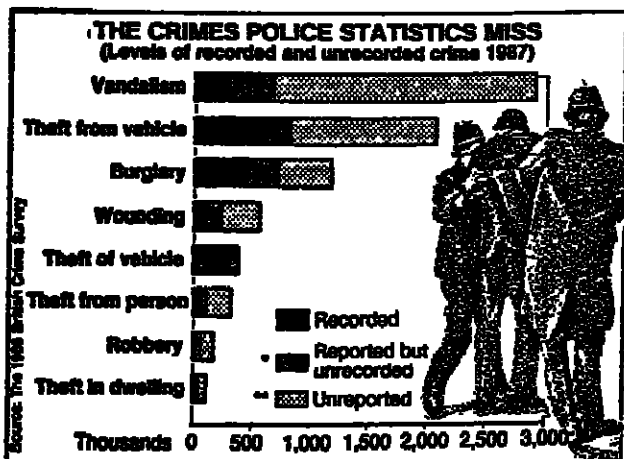
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Ministers attacked for blaming crime rise on public's carelessness



*Police record reports of crime only when satisfied there is evidence that a crime has been committed. **Unreported crime statistics come from crime survey's own interviews with households.

By QUENTIN COWDREY
HOME AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

MINISTERS said yesterday that increased public carelessness about property was largely to blame for a 17 per cent increase in crimes recorded by police in 1990, the second biggest annual rise on record. Opposition MPs and leading criminologists immediately ridiculed the claim.

Home Office figures published yesterday showed that 4.5 million offences were recorded last year, 672,000 more than in 1989. The increase included 245,000 more thefts of motor vehicles and thefts from motor vehicles (up 24.5 per cent), 180,000 more burglaries (up 22 per cent) and 103,000 more cases of criminal damage (up 16

per cent). The total number of recorded sex offences, however, dropped by 689 to 29,044, a 2.3 per cent fall on 1989, and the gross number of violent offences against people rose by 7,722 to 184,684, a 4.4 per cent rise. In each of the previous three years violent offences increased by 12 per cent.

John Patten, Home Office minister of state, said yesterday in a written statement: "The figures show that we are not becoming a more violent society but a more careless one." He did not attend his department's briefing for journalists on the statistics, as he had on many previous occasions.

Criminologists say there is no empirical evidence to support the claim that people are more careless about property. They also point

out that much of the increase in recorded offences involved crimes which have relatively high reporting and recording rates.

About 99 per cent of all thefts of motor vehicles are recorded, mainly because of insurance requirements. Recording rates for other types of vehicle crime and burglary are above average.

The decline in recorded sex offences probably stemmed from a slackening in police activity against homosexuals, though some experts believe it may be linked to the recession. A Home Office research paper published last year suggested that violent offences decrease when people have less to spend on alcohol and out-of-home leisure activities.

The overall clear-up rate declined from 34 per cent to 32 per cent as increases in police efficiency apparently failed to match the rise in recorded crime. Overall police had the highest detection rate among English and Welsh forces, with a clear-up score of 51 per cent, and the Metropolitan Police the lowest, with a rate of 17 per cent.

All 43 police forces recorded increases in crime in 1990, but the 17 per cent average rise, the largest since 1974, disguised wide variations between forces. The small City of London force recorded the lowest increase (0.4 per cent) and Leicestershire the largest (32.9 per cent).

The Association of Chief Police Officers described the large rise in recorded property offences as most

disturbing. The association cited as causes improved reporting of offences; increased acquisitiveness; increased availability of consumer goods; and increased public tolerance of crime.

Roy Hattersley, shadow home secretary, said the figures were shameful. A Labour government, he said, would place far more emphasis on crime prevention.

Ministers later repeated their calls for greater self-help by the public in the fight against crime, saying that many offences could be avoided if people took simple precautions such as locking doors and windows. The ministers' views were echoed by the Police Federation.

Leading article, page 17

Clarke wins fight to penalise bad spelling in exams

By DAVID TYTLER, EDUCATION EDITOR

BAD spelling and incorrect grammar will be penalised after all in GCSE papers this summer, after a compromise agreed between Kenneth Clarke, the education secretary, and his examination advisers. The GCSE boards had previously refused to accept Mr Clarke's request to deduct up to 5 per cent of a pupil's marks for poor use of English.

The education secretary told the boards earlier this year that he expected consistently poor spelling and grammar in all papers to lead to lower marks. The examining boards replied that they did not believe students should be penalised provided they made their meaning clear. English mistakes should be marked down only in English papers.

The School Examinations and Assessment Council, in an almost permanent state of war with Mr Clarke, said it would not be possible to introduce such a system in time for this year's examination and it appeared that the government was prepared to give way. Yesterday, however, the examinations council told the boards that they should warn candidates that they would lose marks for poor English, a move welcomed by Mr Clarke as a "step in the right direction". In a directive sent to the boards the council said: "Can-

didates are expected to use good English and to present their work clearly, using accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar. Where basic English, including specialist vocabulary, is used effectively candidates will gain due credit."

"If candidates make errors in spelling, punctuation or grammar so that their knowledge and understanding of the subject is not effectively communicated, markers will not be able to award full credit."

Mr Page, the first don to be made compulsorily redundant, was yesterday given his job back. The High Court decided that he was entitled to "security of tenure" in a ruling that has serious implications for the country's 48 universities.

Mr Page, a philosophy lecturer at Hull University, successfully argued that he had been appointed under the university's charter and statutes in 1966 and that until he retired at 67 he could not be made redundant. He could be removed only for a "good cause" — such as serious misbehaviour, mental or physical incapacity, scandalous or immoral conduct or failure or inability to perform his duties.

The university did not suggest that Mr Page, aged 60, fell

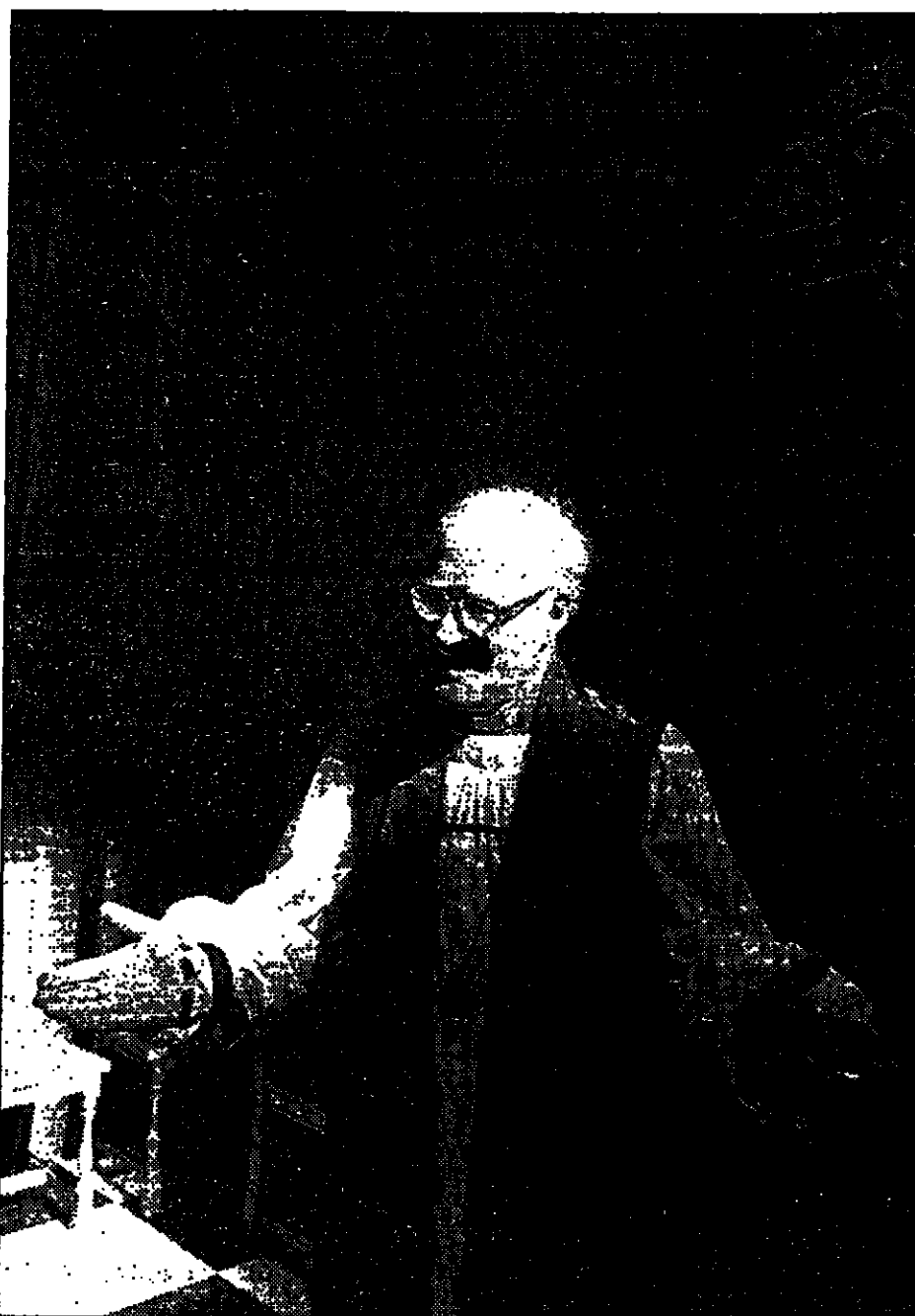
into any of those categories, but argued that his contract of employment could be terminated on three months' notice. Lord Justice Taylor and Mr Justice Roulger rejected the university's argument and declared that it had no power to make Mr Page redundant. His dismissal was therefore without effect.

The ruling does not apply to academics appointed or promoted since the 1988 Education Reform Act, which allows for compulsory redundancy, but most university academic staff were appointed before the act and will be protected by the judgment.

Universities say the recent VAT increase will cost them £30-£40 million a year and that they will be unable to pay it. The country's 48 universities are to produce detailed figures and will then ask the government to help.

About one third of higher education spending, covering services, equipment and fuel, will have to be paid at the full new rate of 17½ per cent from Monday.

A government grant of £500,000 will enable more disabled students to take up places in further and higher education, training and employment, Alan Howarth, junior minister responsible for higher education, said yesterday.



Dr Carey after the ceremony confirming his election as Archbishop

Solemn ceremony confirms Carey as Archbishop

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

TO A peal of bells at St Mary-le-Bow in Cheapside, City of London, Dr George Carey yesterday became Archbishop of Canterbury.

Dr Carey, who was born in east London, was welcomed by a pearly king before the hour-long ceremony, dating back to 1290. It was the first time it had been held at St Mary-le-Bow since 1942 when the church was bombed and the service transferred to St Paul's.

During yesterday's ceremony, a commission appointed by the Queen consisting of Dr John Habgood, the Archbishop of York, and the eight most senior bishops of Canterbury province, confirmed Dr Carey's election as archbishop. As a preliminary to the ceremony, Dr Carey gave his formal consent to his election and then processed into the church. He later led prayers for unity, faith and penitence. As custom dictates, the first person to shake the hand of the new archbishop was the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Alexander Graham.

After the service, presided over by Dr Habgood, Dr Carey gave his first interview as archbishop. Asked about his plans for the Church of England, he said: "I have only just begun. I am just a few minutes old. But I look forward with great optimism because I believe in the power of God. I am looking forward

to carrying on the good work done by my predecessor."

During the service, Dr Habgood said that the dean and Chapter of Canterbury cathedral had lawfully elected "a man both prudent and discreet, deservedly laudable for his life and conversation."

The confirmation of election ceremony was established by the Appointment of Bishops Act 1534. Its basic form has changed little since then and probably predates the act.

Dr Graham Leonard, bishop of London, spoke afterwards of the importance of preserving the traditions of the church. He said the ceremony might appear old-fashioned but had "historical roots which you dig up at your peril". He said he was looking forward to Dr Carey's time as primate. "As one retires in six weeks time, I shall observe with great interest what goes on."

Three killed in stolen car crash

Three people died when a car being driven by joyriders crashed in west Belfast last night. All the dead, thought to be young men, are believed to have been in the stolen car.

The stolen Vauxhall Cavalier collided with a Metro and a Volvo lorry, police said. The car was torn in half by the force of the crash and firemen using cutting gear took over an hour to free the bodies.

In the same area eight days ago Maureen Brammell, aged 23, who was pregnant, died when a car in which she was being driven was hit by two teenage joyriders in a stolen car. Her death led to demands to curb a spate of joyriding in the city.

No verdict yet

The jury in the Hillsborough inquest have not yet reached a verdict on the deaths of 95 football fans who died in April 1989, and last night spent their second night in a hotel in Sheffield. Dr Stefan Popper, South Yorkshire coroner, asked the jury to consider verdicts of unlawful killing, manslaughter or to reach an open verdict. Yesterday he told them he would accept a majority verdict provided at least nine jurors were in agreement. Today is the 80th day of the inquest hearing.

Manx challenge

The Isle of Man yesterday set itself on collision course with Britain and Europe by refusing to legalise homosexuality. Members of the House of Keys voted 15-8 to reject a move to legalise homosexual acts by consenting adults in a decision casting doubt on the island's constitutional independence and its relations with Westminster and in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Wimpey loses

George Wimpey, the construction company whose papers have been seized by Merseyside fraud squad officers investigating Liverpool city council land deals, failed yesterday in its High Court attempt to mount an immediate challenge to the search warrant obtained by the police. Wimpey said later that commercially sensitive and irrelevant documents had been seized.

Bill argument

Conor Bracken, aged 23, an Irish international chess player, who slashed the throat of 21 year old Philip Hughes with a glass table lamp during an argument over a restaurant bill while attending the British Chess Championships at Eastbourne, Sussex, in August, was given a 9 months jail sentence, suspended for two years, and ordered to pay his victim £300 compensation at Lewes Crown court yesterday.

Major gives £29,000 help to former prime ministers

By RICHARD FORD, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

HAVING provided cash to ease poll tax bills and to help haemophiliacs infected with the HIV virus, the prime minister yesterday found another deserving cause on which to shower largesse.

None other than the high priestess of self-help, Margaret Thatcher, and four former prime ministers are the latest beneficiaries of John Major's efforts to show that Conservative governments really do care.

He is to establish a financial allowance to ease the burden facing former prime ministers after they have left office and cease to enjoy the formidable back-up provided by the civil service. An annual allowance of £29,800 is to be available from April 1 to all former prime ministers to help with office and secretarial expenses incurred in their public duties.

Although nothing as vulgar as public lobbying took place, Mr Major acted after friends of Mrs Thatcher let the considerable difficulties she faced on leaving office be known at Westminster.

While there was some sympathy for Mrs Thatcher's predicament, opponents were quick to point out that she has a wealthier background than former Labour prime ministers. But as one senior Labour source said sarcastically: "If as a result of poor Mrs Thatcher's troubles, and I deeply sympathise with them, something better has come along... then it will help improve matters."

The additional allowance means that Mrs Thatcher's entitlements from the state will be more than £100,000 a year. The cash will be on top of the index-linked former prime ministerial pension of £25,362 a year, a reduced backbench MP's salary of £21,000 a year, and a secretarial and office allowance of £27,000 provided to all MPs. She is also entitled to a £10,500 cost-of-living allowance for having a constituency outside inner London.

She is said to command some £60,000 (£34,000) for a lecture in the United States. Only her old soul mate, Ronald Reagan, gets more.

Since resigning as prime minister she has received

65,000 letters, which still arrive at the rate of 500 a week. She has had to deal with invitations to address meetings, ceaseless media bids for interviews, offers from publishers for her memoirs, requests to lend her name to a host of organisations and the work needed to set up a Thatcher Foundation.

She has been provided with offices in an house loaned by Lord McAlpine of West Green and is supported by a staff of seven, including a press aide

and a secretary. When he lost the Conservative leadership to Mrs Thatcher in 1975 he was given an office in which there was room for two secretaries and little else. At times he had to rely on friends to help to open the post. He now employs three people in his private office and a constituency secretary, relying on students to carry out research for him. Mr Heath, who normally gets 200 letters a day, funded his office by lecturing in the United States, Japan and the UK.

A spokesman for Mr Heath said: "He has said that one of the biggest things he noticed about losing the position was going from being supported by a large staff to relying on three or four people to survive."

Although as the years pass most former prime ministers reduce their commitments, they still receive a considerable post and requests for interviews. Given the role they played in post-war British politics, Lords Howe, Wilson, Callaghan and Mr Heath remain important sources of information particularly for writers and academics.

Lord Callaghan undertook lecturing to help to pay for his office after resigning as Opposition leader. Last night he said: "I have already made my arrangements for some years past. This will certainly help."

If former prime ministers are in the Lords, they receive no salary apart from the prime ministerial pension, but, like other peers, they can claim a daily subsistence allowance while in London of £26 a day and a secretarial allowance of £27 a day or a similar sum for telephone calls on party business, periodicals and books when the House is sitting.

A close associate of Lord Wilson said that after he retired from office in 1976 it had been "rough". While supporting additional assis-



Wilson faced "rough" time on leaving office



Thatcher: wealthier than former Labour premiers

who is employed by Sir Tim Bell's company. However, Mrs Thatcher is not the first former prime minister or Leader of the Opposition to discover that little is offered by the British state to smooth the path from high office. Until yesterday's announcement, they were provided with a car, a pension and little else.

A close associate of Lord Wilson said that after he retired from office in 1976 it had been "rough". While supporting additional assis-

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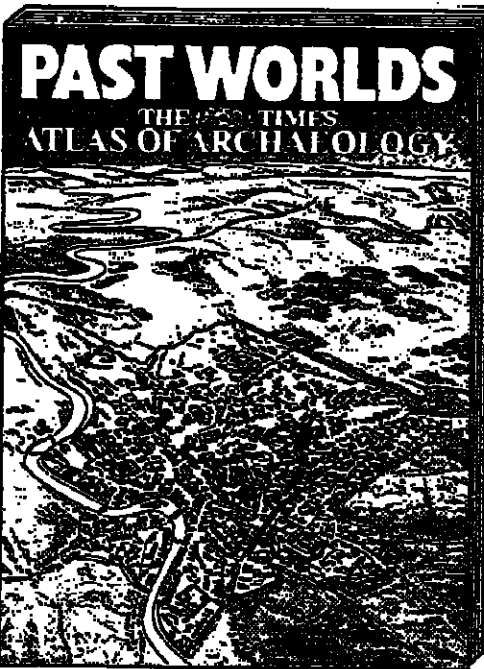
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reading article, page 17

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FFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

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Three killed
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Judges accuse
Birmingham
Six police of
lying in court

By STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

THE detective in charge of the Birmingham Six case, and three of the officers in his team were accused by the Court of Appeal yesterday of lying at the original trial 16 years ago. The court was delivering its judgment on the release of the six almost two weeks ago. In a 73-page document, Lord Justice Lloyd, Lord Justice Mustill and Lord Justice Fargher said new evidence on police notes suggested that, in the absence of any explanation, Det Supt George Reade, now retired, a detective sergeant and two detective constables were "at least guilty of deceiving the court".

The court said that Mr Reade had been unable to explain evidence that notes of interviews with one of the six were not contemporaneous but written on different pads in different pens with pages inserted. Lord Justice Fargher said that no one had been able to think of an honest answer. At best officers were lying when they said in court in 1975 that the notes were a continuous record and at worst they conspired to fabricate part of the interview. The impact of the new evidence would have been very great on the original trial, especially as the defence said the interview never took place.

There were also questions over police notebooks and alterations or amendments. Police might make rough notes before preparing a full note or write up their notes much later but "the difficulty is, however, this was not what was said by the officers at the trial".

The judgment, giving reasons for overturning the convictions of the six, raised other questions about the trial. The Court of Appeal judges found that evidence from Dr Frank Stume, a former Home Office scientist, crucial at the original trial, was now thought to be in grave doubt if not destroyed by fresh work on tests for nitroglycerine. After the judgment, John

Evans, chief constable of Devon and Cornwall and the leader of the team that uncovered the new material, said it was likely he would carry out fresh interviews with Mr Reade and other officers who were among the 25 at the core of the case in 1975. He expects to send a report to the Director of Public Prosecutions in the next few weeks.

Richard McKenny, Patrick Hill, William Power, and Hugh Callaghan were in court to hear the two-hour judgment but Gerard Hunter and John Walker did not attend. Mr Callaghan described the judgment as what he expected while Mr Power thought the judgment was sanitised.

During the nine-day appeal, Graham Bost, counsel for the Director of Public Prosecutions, told the court that the DPP was no longer seeking to rely either on the forensic evidence or on the police witnesses who helped to convict the men of the murder of 21 people in the IRA bombing of two Birmingham public houses.

Yesterday, the men heard the court reject what the judges themselves at one stage dubbed "a damage limitation exercise", finding the convictions both unsafe and unsatisfactory. However, the judges said the strength of the Crown case had been shown at the last appeal in 1987 and yesterday the court pointed to an illustration to material evidence which has been raised against Walker and Callaghan.

They also expressed their unhappiness that the DPP's decision meant new material was not tested by cross-examination. Lord Justice Fargher said the effect of the decision was that "we have not heard the other side put, if there was another side". Referring to the 1987 appeal which failed before Lord Lane, the Lord Chief Justice, the court yesterday noted that none of the new evidence now available was known then.

Couple lose fight to
adopt Romanians

A COUPLE yesterday lost their High Court battle to be allowed to adopt two Romanian orphans and give them a new life in Britain. Mr Patrick Luff, aged 53, and his wife Jean, aged 37, said they were devastated by the decision.

Mr Justice Waite said that he had "sympathy and respect" for the couple, but ruled that advice given by the health department to the Home Office was "rational and cogent". Mr and Mrs Luff, of Harborough Avenue, Sidcup, Kent, had challenged the advice that the Home Office refuse entry clearance for the children because of the health of Mr Luff, who underwent heart by-pass surgery in 1988. The couple, who have been married for 17 years, had seen television pictures showing the plight of children in Romania. They had sought to adopt Marcel Danculescu, aged three, and Florina Pirva, aged two.

The judge said: "The children have already endured

physical and emotional suffering, which may have scarred them for life. Their pressing need is for stability." It was better for children to be spared family bereavement in the teenage years.

Mrs Luff said later: "If someone else adopts them we will be heartbroken but happy if they get a good home. But with hundreds of thousands of orphans the chances are slim."



Luff: told children must have stability

Chemists in the pink with
dresses that change colour

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

THE Royal Society of Chemistry plans to celebrate its 150th birthday this year with a fashion show in which the clothes will change colour, depending on the temperature of the models.

The chameleon-like fabrics will range in colour from black through the spectrum from red to violet as the clothes come into contact with body heat. They are the latest product of an industry that feels it is too often taken for granted.

The materials are based on thermochromic fabric inks, which use the same sort of heat-sensitive liquid crystals used in thermometers. Martin Pellatt, business manager of Merck Industrial Chemicals, which sells the inks, says the reaction time is quick. "If you touch it, it will change colour almost instantaneously." Paul Walker, of the

Walker Slater fashion house, at Lagan Bridge, in the Highlands, says that the clothes will go on sale at Harrods and other shops within the next few weeks. To avoid embarrassment, the designers have been selective in where they place the heat sensitive areas - missing out, for example, the armpits. Those confident enough to wear the clothes will have to pay £198 for a dress and £140 for a top.

The fashion show, organised in co-operation with the London College of Fashion, is one of many events celebrating the anniversary of the world's first chemical society, founded by 25 enthusiasts in February 1841.

Today the society has 42,000 members, 2,000 of whom are expected at the annual congress at Imperial College next month. Jack



Happy return: Lieutenant-General Sir Peter de la Billière, who led British forces in the Gulf, being greeted by his wife Bridget and daughter Philippa at RAF Northolt yesterday, on his return to Britain. Sir Peter will be promoted to full general next month. More troops for Gulf, page 11

Icke warns
the world
of disasters
lying ahead

By JOHN YOUNG

IF YOU were contemplating the possibility of a peaceful summer, forget it. The months ahead will be filled with a succession of catastrophes and catastrophes which most of us can barely hope to survive.

That is if you believe the prophecies of David Icke, one-time Coventry City goalkeeper, television sports presenter, national spokesman for the Green Party and Isle of Wight prospective parliamentary candidate.

For the best part of an hour yesterday Mr Icke lectured a gathering of newsmen and cameramen on the sickness of the world and of its need to regain its balance. Any idea that this might have been an elaborate stunt to publicise his forthcoming book was contemptuously dismissed. He was one of "a team of souls" sent to earth to rid the planet of the influence of Lucifer.

Mr Icke said that a recent avalanche in British Columbia was a forerunner of events which would include devastating floods in Bangladesh and the virtual destruction of the island of Martinique, which would divert the Gulf Stream and seriously affect the climate of Europe. Many of the Scottish islands would, he said, disappear as a result of landscapes and flooding, linked to the simultaneous destruction of Cuba. A hurricane would sweep Northern Ireland, and Shakespeare cliff near Dover would vibrate and bury the Channel Tunnel. Accompanying Mr Icke were his wife, Michaela, his daughter Kerry, aged 16, and a woman called Mari who was, he said, a fellow-messenger and who shared some aspects of the Archangel Michael. All wore turquoise trackuits, turquoise being the colour of positive energy, "of love and wisdom", as opposed to the forces of Lucifer, which preferred black.

Weather experts said yesterday that they had no information which suggested the sort of cataclysmic events that Mr Icke described. The Green Party said that he had resigned his position and could not comment on the beliefs of individual members.

Travel firms expect short Easter boom

By HARVEY ELLIOTT, AIR CORRESPONDENT

THE travel industry was yesterday preparing for the traditional Easter exodus aware that the rush might be short-lived.

This Easter about 200,000 people will head for the Canary Islands, Spain, Portugal, Florida and the cultural cities of Europe, the same number as last year. Most booked their flights around Christmas, before the Gulf war and the recession. Anyone planning to book at

the last minute will, however, be disappointed as the collapse of ILG and its associated holiday companies removed 30,000 seats from the market.

Charles Newbold, managing director of Thomson Holidays, said: "I am afraid there is no point in trying to book anything through us for the next few weeks." He added that the company was expecting a profitable year as it swallows up most of ILG's customers.

The British Tourist Authority said that a successful bank holiday depended

on the weather. "When Easter falls early, as it does this year, it is never as good but we are optimistic."

Those Britons holidaying at home will see fewer foreign tourists. Dawn McCormick Dean, executive administrator of the British incoming tour operators association, said the French, Germans and Dutch were returning but few Americans. The Japanese were staying away, apparently thinking that they were unwelcome for failing to play a part in the Gulf war.

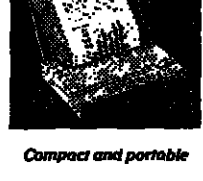
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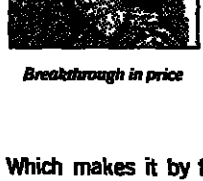
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Income of poorest families 'reduced under Thatcherism'

By JILL SHERMAN, SOCIAL SERVICES CORRESPONDENT

THE poorest groups have lost out to the rich during the 1980s and seen their incomes fall in real terms, according to a report from Bristol University's social policy department.

The study shows that the gap between rich and poor is widening, with the income of the poorest fifth of households declining sharply in relation to average income. Peter Townsend, author of the report, said: "Contrary to the claims made by Mrs Thatcher, when prime minister, and by other ministers, the poorest sections of the population experienced a fall in real disposable incomes during the decade 1979 to 1989." The groups worst hit were families with children and single adults under pension age, particularly under-25s.

In the ten years to 1989, the real annual income of the average household increased from £10,561 to £13,084 at 1989 prices. The income of the poorest 20 per cent fell, on average, by £160 to £3,282. The income of the richest 20

per cent increased by more than a third from £20,138 to £28,124. "However the trend is measured, the shift from poor to rich in access to the bulk of the disposable resources of the nation, is dramatic," the report says.

Newly available information for the last two years from the annual reports of the Family Expenditure Survey shows that the average real income of the poorest fifth had not changed by more than a few pence a week. The annual real disposable income of the richest 20 per cent increased by £1,300.

Between 1987 and 1989, some groups within the poorest 20 per cent did particularly badly. Single state pensioners lost out by £33.28 a year and a couple by £89.96. Single adults below pensionable age lost £218.40 a year in disposable income. The income of one-parent families stayed almost static but couples with three and four or more children lost £357.76 and £518.84 a year respectively. The report says

the figures show that the trickle down theory has not happened. The figures also contradict Mrs Thatcher's final speech as prime minister in the Commons when she criticised an MP for daring to suggest that the poor had not gained during her premiership. "People on all levels of income are better off than they were in 1979," she said.

The study also claims that the statistics probably underestimate the real fall in income as they do not include the loss of free school meals, higher prices because of privatisation of public services, the effect of the poll tax and new water charges.

The government released a further £115 million to 106 local authorities yesterday to help homeless families, £91 million of which will be spent in London (Douglas Broom writes). The money is the second instalment of a £300 million initiative to reduce local authorities' use of bed and breakfast hotels to house homeless families.



Quietly composed: Paul McCartney, the former Beatle, taking a break outside Liverpool's Anglican cathedral yesterday from rehearsals of an oratorio he helped to write for the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra's 150th anniversary

MoD no longer an 'easy touch' for industry

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

THE Ministry of Defence was no longer an easy touch for industry, Sir Peter Levene, head of the £9 billion equipment programme, said yesterday as he prepared to hand over to a successor after six years in the job.

Sir Peter, who was appointed from private industry at a salary of £95,000 a year by Michael Heseltine, then defence secretary, said the relationship with contractors used to be like a big happy family, until he arrived. He admitted there had been a year or two of confrontation with the defence industry as his pursuit of value for money and competition had been a shock.

Sir Peter, aged 49, who is returning to the private sector, said four years ago he had listed five equipment programmes which he feared would cause trouble: the anti-radar Alarm missile for the RAF, the Foxhunter radar system for Tornado, the com-

mand and control Cacs system for the new Type 23 frigate, the EH101 helicopter, and the European Fighter Aircraft (EFA), which was being developed with three Nato partners.

But the Alarm missile had been rushed into service early for the Gulf war and had performed well; the Foxhunter radar had not answered the RAF's prayers but was a distinct improvement on the previous system. Cacs had been delayed but a contract had been agreed, after the original deal with Ferranti was cancelled; the EH101 programme was still undecided and EFA was "now moving on after all sorts of problems".

Sir Peter said he believed he had saved the defence ministry the equivalent of about 10 per cent of the equipment budget each year, or £900 million, with his policy.

Sir Peter is succeeded by Malcolm McIntosh, an Australian civil servant.

Doubts over future of Navy helicopter

THE EH101 Merlin helicopter for the Royal Navy, under development by a British and Italian consortium, could be a world-beater. But its future is now being looked at by the Ministry of Defence because the programme's cost has doubled to about £2 billion and by the time the first Merlins are in service, they will be nearly five years late.

If the government goes ahead with production of 50 Merlins, which are due to replace Sea King and Lynx helicopters, the Navy will have to wait until 1997 for the first 17. By then the Sea King will be nearly 30 years old. Merlin was scheduled to be in service by 1992-3.

The defence ministry, facing a diminishing budget, is concerned with one issue: is Merlin affordable? So concerned are officials that a range of alternatives is being studied, none of which, it is privately acknowledged, is considered satisfactory.

The Merlin, which will have both an anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare capability, is being developed by the Westland helicopter company in Yeovil, Somerset, in collaboration with the Italian firm, Agusta, under the overall name of EH Industries.

There is also a civilian version and a tactical support EH101, potentially for the RAF to ferry troops, although government purchase of this "utility" helicopter appears to have been ruled out by Alan Clark, the minister for defence procurement, who said in the Commons last week that the EH101 was a naval weapon.

The fifth of nine pre-production Merlins passed its official test certification earlier this month. But even as a test pilot was flying the helicopter at Boscombe Down, officials in London were examining options which included dropping Merlin and buying an American model or scrapping the whole idea and keeping the Sea King. That has already

Michael Evans says that delays and rising costs have made the defence ministry look critically at the Merlin

had three updates since it came into service in 1969 and has difficulty landing on smaller ships, like the Royal Navy's new Type 23 frigates.

The American alternative is not regarded as ideal, either. The SH-60B Seahawk LAMPS 3 would limit anti-submarine operations to within 60 miles of a warship, and the helicopter has to be wound down, when returning to the deck.

Six years ago, when Sir Peter Levene became head of the defence ministry's procurement executive, he studied the EH101 programme and saw it could be another Nimrod—the British airborne early warning plane which was scrapped at a cost of nearly £1 billion in 1986.

He demanded tighter management, greater risk-sharing and then, two years ago, an overall prime contractor responsible for overseeing the complete fit of weapons, sonar and avionics systems to the airframe. Two consortia, IBM teamed with Westland, and British Aerospace with GEC, put their bids in last month and the ministry will decide on them by July.

The initial Royal Navy requirement was for 74 Merlins, but this was reduced to 50 and the overall cost of the programme was "rate-capped" by ministers to £1 billion, at 1983-4 prices. Buy officials admit the real figure today is about £2 billion.

The ministry hopes the Merlin programme can go ahead Westland is also desperately anxious for the production contract, which would guarantee the jobs of at least 1,000 workers at Yeovil.



World-beater? A Merlin helicopter lands on a carrier

Chataway to be CAA chairman

A FORMER Olympic athlete and Conservative MP is to become the new chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), Christopher Chataway will take up the five-year post at the end of May in succession to Sir Christopher Tugendhat.

Mr Chataway, aged 60, represented Great Britain in the 1952 and 1956 Olympics and in 1954 briefly held the world 5,000-metres record. He was a reporter with ITN and a current affairs commentator with the BBC before being elected MP for Lewisham North in 1959.

During the Seventies he was posts and telecommunications minister and industrial development minister. He has been chairman of the Crown Communications Group since 1987 and is chairman of Action Aid. He was treasurer of the national committee for electoral reform.

UK's rail plan echoed by Europe

RADICAL ideas similar to British plans for railway privatisation are being launched by the European Commission, which wants to open European railway monopolies to competition (George Brock writes from Brussels).

Karel van Miert, the transport commissioner, yesterday presented national transport ministers with suggestions for European rules that would end public service monopolies and would allow cross-border access to multi-national rail companies. Malcolm Rifkind, British transport minister, welcomed the commission's ideas and congratulated the commission on being the "engine of change".

Decisions about European rail liberalisation are, however, at least several months away and some governments, led by France, oppose the plans, saying that railways must remain a public service.

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Mystery fuels rumour that hall is Saddam's Suffolk retreat

BRITISH workmen supervised by an Iraqi foreman were busy yesterday refurbishing Heveningham Hall, Suffolk's finest Georgian mansion, as heritage groups pressed the government to discover who owns it and what plans there are for its future.

Rumours that the 18th-century hall with its 200ft neo-Classical facade is part of Saddam Hussein's overseas fortune have proved impossible to confirm.

Even Kroll Associates, the world's biggest financial investigation agency, have failed to establish a link — but "we are still working on it" their London office said yesterday. The tangled story surrounding the ownership of Heveningham was further complicated early this

An 18th-century mansion in Suffolk is rumoured to be part of Saddam Hussein's stolen overseas fortune. Its ownership, however, is far from clear. Andrew Lycett reports

month when the man who was thought to own it died from a heart attack.

Michael Heseltine, as environment secretary in 1981, told the Commons that the hall (estimated to be now worth £10 million), had been sold for £740,000 to Abdul-Amir al-Ghazzi, an Iraqi businessman. It was later discovered that the hall was really bought by an impenetrable Swiss corporation with which the Iraqi was associated.

Al-Ghazzi, a bachelor who was 53 when he died, was a wealthy wheeler-dealer in Middle East oil, close to many Gulf royal families and friendly with the great and the good in Britain. He was a popular figure at first with villagers in nearby Halesworth. A strikingly round man, he had a voice once described as like "a

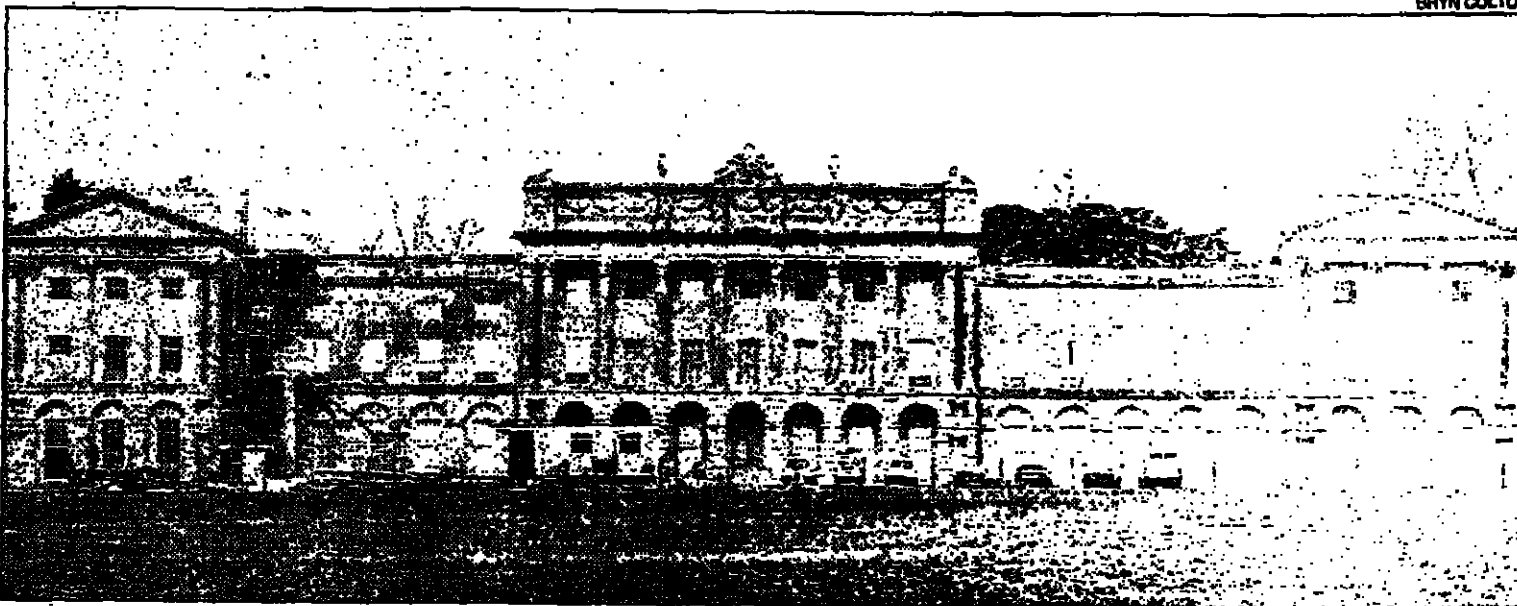
brass band going through a tunnel" — often heard in the local Huntingford Arms. His popularity waned, however, as conservation groups expressed concern over the pace and quality of the hall's refurbishment.

In 1988, when al-Ghazzi unsuccessfully sought permission to divert an ancient footpath, ostensibly for security reasons, it emerged that the hall was not owned by him personally, but by a Swiss corporation, ID Investment Development, whose shares are held in bearer form.

Yesterday Ian Richardson, a local carpenter who chairs Heveningham Action Committee, said: "We still don't know that there isn't some secret Middle East connection. It is unsatisfactory that such an important house has been sold into such tenuous hands."

Mr Richardson says that although al-Ghazzi signed a covenant with the employment department making him personally responsible for improvements, the fact that the hall is owned by a Swiss corporation makes the stipulations difficult to enforce.

Last summer Mr Richardson wrote to Chris Patten, then environment secretary, expressing concern that al-Ghazzi was an agent or representative of the Iraqi



Stately progress: conservation groups claim that restoration of 18th century Heveningham Hall has gone too slowly under its latest owner

government "or a body affiliated with or supported by it". At the time of the sale in 1981 Mr Patten was managing director of al-Ghazzi's flagship company Gulf Development with headquarters in Mayfair.

Mr Richardson approached him in this capacity for details of the ownership of ID Investment Development. Mr Patten replied that he had played no part in the purchase or subsequent management of the hall. Heveningham Hall was

built in the late 18th century as a country retreat for Sir George Vaneck, a London merchant. It boasts James Wyatt interiors and parklands by Capability Brown. By 1970 the Vanecks were no longer able to afford the upkeep and sold the hall to the government which administered it for a decade through the National Trust. The trust did not have the funds to purchase the fast deteriorating house outright and after a year of casting around Mr Heseltine announced it had

been sold to al-Ghazzi, subject to a number of covenants ensuring its restoration and upkeep. Al-Ghazzi had been recommended by Sir Ian Gilmour, the Conservative MP, who was on the Gulf Development board with Mr Patten.

In June 1984 Heveningham's east wing was destroyed by fire. For five years little was done to rebuild or even protect it from the elements. Only one of the covenants — that the orangery should be restored — was fully implemented. A series of burglaries occurred, including one in which a valuable James Wyatt fireplace was removed from the dining room. There is disagreement among experts about the quality of the refurbishments.

Lord Wyatt, the tote board chairman and a descendant of James Wyatt, said that it was a shame his friend al-Ghazzi had attracted so much criticism because he had loved Britain. He had spent over £5 million refurbishing the house; no

one else would have made such a commitment. Any Iraqi government connection must be discounted. "Al-Ghazzi used to laugh at such suggestions," Lord Wyatt said.

Yesterday men were working on the fire-damaged east wing of the hall as sheep grazed in spring sunshine on the front lawn.

Gulf Park Property Management, responsible for the day to day maintenance of the hall, declined to comment on the ownership of the property.



Al-Ghazzi: popular figure in the local public house

Protest over total barred from legal aid

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

A BIG drop in the number of people eligible for legal advice under the legal aid scheme is disclosed in research published yesterday showing that little over a third of the population now qualifies for help under the scheme.

The research, commissioned by the Law Society and the Legal Action Group, has found that 20 million people (37 per cent) are eligible for legal advice under the "green form" scheme compared with 47 per cent three years ago. Since 1979, the fall in the numbers eligible is even more dramatic, the two bodies say. In 1979 56 million, or two-thirds of the population, were eligible for legal aid under the scheme.

Roger Smith, director of the Legal Action Group which with the Law Society commissioned the research, said: "If you average it out over the three years, 150 people per hour are falling out of the legal aid scheme, totalling 15.3 million over three years. With these figures, it is impossible to see what government policy is and we challenge the Lord Chancellor to state what his policy on eligibility is."

The research, carried out by Michael Murphy, a statistician at the London School of Economics, also shows that far fewer people now qualify for full legal aid (covering court proceedings). Despite reforms last year enabling children to qualify for legal aid irrespective of parents' means, the research shows that the proportion of eligible house-

holds fell from 61 per cent in 1987 to 51 per cent in 1990.

In personal injuries cases, where the income limit is higher, eligibility fell from 61 per cent in 1987 to 57 per cent in 1990. In 1979, 81 per cent of households qualified.

This year the government has frozen the upper income limits, which determine who qualifies, further reducing eligibility both for legal advice and legal aid. Such a step was unprecedented, the society said yesterday. John Appleby, chairman of the Law Society's Courts and Legal Services committee, said: "For all except the rich, access to justice depends upon a healthy legal aid system. It is disheartening that the government has presided over such a serious decline in the level of eligibility. The prospects for the future look bleak."

The findings have been released shortly before the Lord Chancellor is expected to publish his own proposals for a radical review of the legal aid scheme. A key proposal is expected to be the abolition of legal aid to which people are required to pay contributions. It would be replaced by a system in which everyone above the poverty line would have to spend up to £2,000 to £3,000 before they qualify for legal aid.

Solicitors in England and Wales will be able to join with foreign lawyers in multi-national partnerships from January 1992 under draft Law Society rules published yesterday.

Money runs out for Guinness defendant

By PAUL WILKINSON

Lord Spens, the merchant banker accused of complicity in the Guinness affair, faces the start of his trial later this spring without counsel because his legal aid limit of £100,000 has been almost exhausted. He also learnt this week that his former solicitors intend to sue him for £135,000 in unpaid fees.

Now Lord Spens has written asking the Lord Chancellor, as head of the legal aid scheme, to investigate what he called a thoroughly unsatisfactory state of affairs. He suggests that legal aid is not geared to help defendants in complex, long-running cases.

He faces two charges of conspiracy and false accounting in the second trial to come out of Guinness's £2.7 billion take-over of the drinks group Distillers in 1987.

Lord Spens, who read law at Cambridge, financed his own defence after his arrest in March 1988, but, after spending £300,000, he decided he could not afford to continue and elected to conduct his own case. An application for a legal aid was granted in the new year, but the Legal Aid Board capped it at £100,000. His co-defendant in the trial, Roger Seelig, a former director of the merchant bank Morgan Grenfell, is also defending



Spens: solicitors suing for £135,000 in unpaid fees

himself after claiming to have spent £700,000 on lawyers before even coming to trial. In his letter to the Lord Chancellor, Lord Spens says he sought legal aid because the situation of two unrepresented defendants facing a prosecution team led by two silks was too ridiculous to contemplate. His present lawyers have spent several thousand hours on his case, but are now becoming "dangerously" close to being unable to continue. Keeping a full defence team in court costs around £5,000 a day and Lord Spens has been involved in a pre-trial review at Southwark crown court since last autumn. This week there was a three-day appeal before judges in the appeal court.



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PREVENTION WEEK 15 APRIL 1991

Major fights back in Commons no-confidence debate Scrapping poll tax only option, Kinnock says

By OUR PARLIAMENTARY STAFF

THE poll tax is still alive and kicking, the people, Neil Kinnock said in the Commons last night. The only way to relieve the misery it brought to millions was to scrap it. The government had got itself into the poll tax mess and was not competent to get itself out, which was why the Opposition had tabled a vote of no confidence.

John Major responded to Labour's attack by emphasising the far-reaching nature of the review of local government that had been put in hand. "We intend to give local government back to local people."

He claimed that the government was winning the battle against inflation. It had fallen in the past four months and in the next six they would see sharp reductions.

Mr Kinnock said that from the government that brought the poll tax to replace the rates there was now a new epic, the poll tax and the rates. The reason for this device and the consultation was not to do with the interests of the country; it was to do with keeping the conflicting factions in the Conservative party and the cabinet together with some appeasement for each of them.

Conservative candidates would be going into the council elections in May with no knowledge of whether they were supporting a poll tax or a property tax or a mixed tax. They were going to fight an election on a manifesto entitled "Wait and See" and a slogan "Don't ask us, we're only the government".

In this whole tangle there were assiduous attempts to blame the entire poll tax mess on the previous prime minister. Mr Major, who was a former Chancellor and chief secretary, had said that he was "bounced". That said much more about the prime minister than about Margaret Thatcher.

He referred to other members of the government who had supported the poll tax in the past and concluded that they were either innocent and glib or — the more ugly conclusion — they knew the



Major makes his point: "We intend to give local government back to local people"

truth about the poll tax but a mixture of defiance and ambition made dishonest men of them. "Either way they should not be sitting there," he said.

Even in the midst of their relief over the £140 cut which some would get off their poll tax bills, the people knew that it was coming from themselves. They knew that they were being made to pay for the government's errors and hypocrisies. But at least by increasing value-added tax the government was honouring the principle that everyone should contribute. Everyone certainly would. All would pay the poll tax VAT surcharge.

Sir Anthony Grant, Conservative MP for South West Cambridgeshire, asked what increases in tax there would have to be to pay for Mr Kinnock's intended increases in

grant to local authorities.

Mr Kinnock replied that for 12 years they had been telling the government they should not be making cuts in central government funding of essential services. Tory councillors had been telling them the same thing. In the Budget, there had been a death-bed repentance and a reversal of government failures of 12 years. "The answer to how much extra tax will we have to charge is nothing."

He pointed to differences in what members of the government had said about the principle that everyone should pay and whether there would have to be a register and he called to the prime minister to make clear where he stood.

"Is he going to be the father to the son of poll tax? Or is he going to be father to the daughter of rates? Or is he going to sit there having twins?"

Michael Heseltine had said that they should not worry about winners and losers. Those were matters of detail. It might not matter to the environment secretary and the prime minister, but all over the country there were people worried to distraction about how they were going to cope with this two-tax turmoil. There was only one sensible thing to do: scrap the poll tax.

Mr Major said that the Opposition had not opposed the bill to reduce the community charge and had not voted against the Budget increase in VAT. They followed where the government led "because they knew that what he had done was sensible and they lacked courage to admit it".

Turning to the poll tax, he said that the review of local government would be the most radical this century.

"We intend to give local government back to local people. If we had not offered consultation, we would have been rightly and bitterly criticised, not least by Labour. We will listen. We will take advice and we will consider. We will do it in that order and then we will decide what we are finally going to do."

There would be a single local tax bill for every household; the tax would be low, lower in real terms than the old rates bills; it would reflect ability to pay, with rebates for those on low incomes; it would keep local councils accountable; the single person living alone would not pay the same as larger households; capping would be retained.

Labour had no plans to keep down tax bills or inflation. Every time the government faced a hard decision, the Opposition went for the soft option. However much was spent, it was not enough. When interest rates were brought down, it should have been by more.

"Inflation has now been falling for four successive months. The next six months will see dramatic reductions. Indeed, I expect a sharp drop in the inflation rate within two months."

Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, said both the government and Labour opposition had concentrated on attacking their opponent rather than elucidating their own policies. Poll taxpayers watching the debate or reading about it to get information would be badly disappointed.

The debate was a prime example of what was wrong with the Commons. It was time the Commons started to speak for the people.

Parliament today

Commons (9.30): Easter adjournment debates on a variety of topics.
Lords (11): Arms control and disarmament (inspections) bill and British waterways bill, second readings.

Westminster sets zero tax

By DOUGLAS BROOM, LOCAL GOVERNMENT CORRESPONDENT

MICHAEL Heseltine, the environment secretary, gave his blessing yesterday to a plan by Conservative Westminster council to become the second local authority in Britain to set a zero community charge.

Westminster had set a poll tax of £176 that was reduced to £36 by the government's decision last week to cut £140 off poll tax levels. The council says it costs £47 a head to collect its poll tax. Lady Porter, the council's leader, told Mr Heseltine that it would not be worth while to collect £36 and proposed that Westminster should re-set its poll tax at £140.

Mr Heseltine indicated that

the government would not stop Westminster if it decided to alter the poll tax to achieve a zero level. So far only Wandsworth, south London, has a zero poll tax, having levied £136 before the £140 cut.

Labour-controlled Southampton city council said yesterday that it, too, was preparing to cut its poll tax by more than £140. A council meeting next Wednesday will be asked to approve a £155 cut in its £395 community charge. Alan Whitehead, leader of the council, said that the

national reduction in poll tax meant that allowances made by his council to cover late and non-payments were now over-generous and the balance should go back to the charge payer.

Southampton is hoping to make a political point at the expense of its Conservative-controlled neighbours. "We are the only socialist council in a sea of Tory blue," Mr Whitehead said. "They have all been raiding their reserves and setting impossible budgets to keep the poll tax down while we have followed a financially prudent course which can now be seen to have paid off."

Labour suspends Lambeth thirteen

By RICHARD FORD AND DOUGLAS BROOM

THIRTEEN Lambeth councillors were suspended by the Labour party yesterday as the leadership moved to limit the wider political damage being caused by their refusal to toe the party line.

The party's ruling national executive committee also suspended Steve Nally, secretary of the All Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation and another prominent activist, Kevin Fernandez.

An investigation into the activities of the ruling Labour group in Lambeth by the party's director of organisation found evidence of misconduct in group meetings and a systematic breach of the group whip. Among the councillors suspended from holding office were Joan Twelves, the Labour leader, John Harrison, the deputy leader, and Julian Lewis, the chief whip.

Last night Ms Twelves said that she would defy the NEC as to obey would be irresponsible at a time when the council was in the middle of implementing a budget involving cuts of £25 million. "I will continue to carry out my duties as leader of the council. I am appointed by the council, not the Labour party," she said that she had been advised that she was at risk of being suspended if she did not stay and take decisions on the cash cuts.

The Labour leadership is determined that the activities of a minority of councillors in high-profile local authorities should not provide political ammunition for the Conservatives to use during a general election. A party source said: "We are asserting the authority of the NEC. We need to ensure that the party is in good shape, in line with national policies in facing problems."

The investigation found that the inefficiency within Lambeth's ruling Labour group had resulted in the south London borough not being properly administered. That had had a detrimental political effect in London and beyond. Party sources said that all 13 suspended councillors had been in breach of the party whip on at least eight occasions during the past two years.

Gloomy Tories can take some heart even from the polls

By ROBIN OAKLEY, POLITICAL EDITOR

Labour's tactics since the Gulf War ended have paid rich dividends. A thin-skinned cabinet has over-reacted and vacillating.

Helped by the imprecision of the intended consultation papers, Labour has succeeded too in attacking the government both for climbing down on the poll tax and for retaining it.

Tory nerves are fraying visibly. But what did they expect? Once normal political life was resumed it was clear that Labour would seek to undermine the credibility of a prime minister enjoying the best personal standing in opinion polls since Churchill (Labour's private research shows that those figures are already coming down). If John Major had been cracking out decisions like pistol shots, he would have been attacked for being another handbag-swinging, failing to consult and take the nation with him on key policy questions. The prime minister, by nature a decider rather than a dodger, is bound to appear imprecise in these early days, as Labour strategists have appreciated, because he has to tread a wary line between doing his own thing and reassuring the Thatcherite faithful. The public tends not to vote for parties in disarray and Mr Major has to maintain unity. He cannot realistically go to the public in June, October or next spring saying "Sorry, the past 12 years were an aberration, please let us have another go".

If he moves too quickly, the Thatcherites will squeal publicly. But he has to change sufficiently to assure those who had had enough of Thatcherism that he has his own ideas. Combining those two objectives is bound to offer opportunities for opposition taunts that he does not know where he is going. It is where he has come from that creates the problems for Mr Major.

The Tories should take a deep breath, however, and remind themselves of the facts. The Mori poll last weekend may have put them six points behind Labour. The Mori poll in March 1990 put them 24 points behind. Of the 20 important opinion polls taken so far this year the Conservatives have enjoyed a lead of between 0.5 and 6 points in 16 of them.

Labour needs a 6 per cent swing to be a minority government and 8 per cent to govern the country alone. The swing on the average of the polls in March is only 5.5 per cent, and government parties can usually count on movements in their favour once an election campaign begins. People then concentrate more on who should govern the country for five years than on the latest poll which has irritated them.

Labour exultation and Tory panic should be suspended until we have seen the results

of the local elections in May. And the pity of those this year is that London is not going to the polls, for it is in the capital city that the outcome of the next election is likely to be determined.

Of the 100 or so seats that Labour must capture to win an election, 25 are in London. But last year's local elections showed a "London factor" at work that could upset all Labour's calculations.

As Stuart Weir told a Common Voice seminar on the capital's marginals yesterday, Labour, with a poll standing of 49 per cent nationally, took just 34 per cent of the votes cast. Repetition of those results would see Labour capturing only 17 of those key London seats, and the party now stands 5 per cent lower in the polls. Not only that, the Liberal Democrats would have taken Poplar and Bow off Labour. Since last May Labour has been in turmoil in London as Walworth Road has sought to take over campaigning in the capital from the London party and to make Terry Ashton, the



Jack Cunningham

London Labour party general secretary, the scapegoat for the flop. Mr Ashton has survived three attempts to oust him, largely thanks to the threat by party organisers to go on strike for this year's local elections if he were dumped. But the row has seen Kinnock versus Hattersley, Walworth Road versus the London party and the quashing of Jack Cunningham's plan for a London spokesman. Hardly an ideal preparation for pre-election harmony in Labour's capital campaigning.

Labour is suffering from long-term migration out of the capital by its traditional working class supporters and the incoming of professional classes and ethnic minorities, among whom black youths in particular show a low propensity to vote. Further, Mr Weir, former editor of the *New Statesman*, said at the seminar, the effect of the "Loony Left" lingers on. Labour councils are still perceived as expensive and inefficient and it is difficult to see how the image can be pulled round before a general election.

Robert Waller, the pollster and author of the invaluable *Almanac of British Politics*, points out that in many London seats, as in inner cities elsewhere, those who have failed to register for voting, for fear that the register would be used for poll tax cross-checking, are mostly potential Labour voters.

That, with the existence of seats where a racist white backlash works against Labour and seats within the areas of "model" Tory councils such as Wandsworth and Westminster which are likely to buck the trend, makes winning sufficient seats in the capital an uphill battle for Labour.

Heath gives Major his full support

By ROBERT MORGAN, PARLIAMENTARY STAFF

THE prime minister and his government received firm backing from Edward Heath, the former prime minister, when he intervened in the "no confidence" debate. He said that John Major had embarked on an enormous task and he warned the government not to go too quickly with its local government reforms. It was speed and lack of consultation on the poll tax that had led to the difficulties.

Mr Heath said that he was sad if his support for the government depressed Labour MPs who had "strongly and loudly supported me during the 15 difficult years". He recalled that he had always said that the poll tax was unwelcome and would damage the Conservative party. Now Mr Major was limiting the damage and leading the party to recovery.

The government faced an enormous problem in tackling the finances of local government and the structure and

functions. "I see no reason why it should be rushed."

The changes in the early Seventies had established authorities of a size to do the job they were required to do. Subsequent changes had been brought about largely because of bias against local authorities. London was a case in point. There was now no structure for dealing with the problems of one of the great cities of the world. "It [the abolition of the Greater London Council] was done from sheer bile against an authority which at that moment did not happen to be Conservative."

He went on to urge the government not to dismiss the idea of a local income tax.



Heath: government must not move too quickly

Electors 'bribed with own money'

By JOHN WINDER

THE bill to reduce community charges by £140 was described by Lord McIntosh of Haringey, Opposition spokesman, as political expediency and a way of bribing the electors with their own money.

Moving the second reading of the community charges (general reduction) bill, Lord Waddington, leader of the House, said that the government was not seeking to reform local government in the bill. That would require a much longer measure.

Lord McIntosh of Haringey said that the precedent of taking the bill through in one day was of great significance. There was no reason why Labour should

not use it to renege on British Telecom, or Liberal Democrats to introduce local income tax. It was a dangerous precedent.

The government had got itself with great rapidity into a state of utter confusion over what to do about local government finance. The bill arose from panic measures from the Chancellor, from the environment department, and from 10 Downing Street. The whole point was to get the government out of the hole it had dug itself into. The bill

was not to deal with the problem, but to cover up the mess.

"It is like medieval ladies and gentlemen who, instead of washing, covered themselves even more thickly with pomade and paint, and used heavy spices and perfumes to cover the fact that their whole bodies stank. I nearly said that it would not wash, but it is intended to persuade us of something that is not the case."

Earl Russell, for the Liberal Democrats, said that the government had made two big mistakes, in introducing a flat-rate tax and in trying to introduce a tax that everybody paid.

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Tensions grow over hardliner-reformist confrontation in Moscow while miners flex political muscle

Battle lines drawn for Yeltsin debate

FROM MARY DEJEVSKY IN MOSCOW

TENSION in the Soviet capital was palpable throughout yesterday as delegates assembled for an emergency meeting of the full Russian parliament, which many fear, and some hope, could spell the end of Boris Yeltsin's political career.

The full parliament, the Congress of People's Deputies, opens this morning in a city and a country racked by political conflict and economic hardship, where the tiniest spark could start a national conflagration.

In the foreground raged a conflict about a demonstration planned by radicals, approved by Moscow city council and banned by the Soviet government amid warnings of violence and disorder. The demonstrators want to express support for Mr Yeltsin, the Russian leader, whose political future they believe to be threatened by the well-organised hardliners. The ban has brought pledges from Muscovites to turn out in their thousands, and promises from the city police (now under the direct command of the central interior ministry) to show "maximum restraint and maximum firmness".

In the background looms a political and economic crisis as comprehensive as anything the Soviet Union has experienced, in which all elements have come menacingly together: the most pervasive and

damaging outbreak of labour unrest the country has faced, probably, since the 1920s; imminent price rises for all goods, including staple foods; and a struggle for power between the Soviet centre and the Russian Federation exacerbated by the antipathy of the two leaders.

The future of one or other of those antagonists, or both, could be decided in the coming days.

The Russian congress was called six weeks ago at the height of conflict in the Russian parliament between supporters and opponents of Mr Yeltsin. For months the legislative process had been paralysed; Mr Yeltsin lacked the majority to pass laws and resolutions, while his opponents lacked the majority to oust him.

Finally, a group of six, including three of his deputies — now pilloried for their treachery — put their names to a condemnation of his leadership style and political inconsistency. Their statement forced a vote on convening an extraordinary congress, the only institution that can oust an incumbent leader.

Mr Yeltsin's opponents had demanded that the congress be held before the March 17 referendum, in an attempt to stop him winning support for a separate Russian presidency.



City on edge: military vehicles wait near the Kremlin in case of pro-Yeltsin disturbances Moscow and, right, militiamen move on a woman protesting at a ban on demonstrations



His supporters had hoped to postpone it until later or avoid holding it at all. In a marginal victory for the radicals, March 28 was the date agreed. Now it looks like an unpropitious choice for all concerned.

The agenda, still being fought over yesterday, is expected to include a report on "the state of the Russian Federation" by Mr Yeltsin, which will amount to his self-defence. If the radicals have got their way in the planning stages, there may be discussion of the proposed Russian constitution. If not, the discussion will be restricted to the contentious issue of the Russian presidency.

Mr Yeltsin won a mandate for the introduction of a presidency to be directly elected in the March 17 referendum. His more than 70 per cent majority of votes cast was sufficient to strengthen his case at the congress, and

more. It may not be sufficient, however, to ensure that a date and a procedure for such elections are fixed. If the conservatives, spearheaded by the hardline communists, have organised with their customary iron discipline, then Mr Yeltsin's future could be in doubt. After the referendum, however, his position looks more secure.

In the days before the congress, Mr Yeltsin's team cooked up an impressive diversion in the form of a new economic plan for the republic, a revised version of the so-called "500-day" programme. If Mr Yeltsin feels his position genuinely threatened, discussion of the economic plan, with its schemes for privatisation, freeing the agricultural services sector (but not farming itself) from state control, and encouragement to foreign trade, could take up hours and days of discussion.

In the two weeks before the congress, President Gorbachev has been restrained. In his only televised statement on Tuesday night, his regular emotional jabs at Mr Yeltsin for "irresponsibility", "political ambition", "demagoguery" and other sins were absent.

Mr Yeltsin has been less careful with his words, though he has said repeatedly he has no intention of splitting the Soviet Union. The supporters of either side, however, have been heard loud and clear. In the country at large, the groundswell of support for Mr Yeltsin is exhilarating and frightening by turns.

During a visit to the Kirov factory in Leningrad last week, he was mobbed and cheered. The factory was decked in pro-Yeltsin banners which were not taken down even when the visitor was not Mr Yeltsin but the prime minister, Valentin Pavlov.

The coalminers, whose three-week strike is now both threatening and being supported by the steelworkers, have pledged to stay out until Mr Yeltsin's position is secure. Any move to oust him would be met by a general strike across the country.

Metal workers throughout the Soviet Union were reported yesterday to have staged protests against their economic plight. A sign of discontent on the factory floor in a key industrial sector was the two-hour "warning strike" staged by a workers' committee at the Uralmash engineering plant in Sverdlovsk, the territory of Mr Yeltsin.

Aleksandr Aslanidze, the deputy strike leader in the Kuzbass coal mining region, said some miners of other metals had promised to strike if there were any "repression" against the coal workers.

Price rises fuel militants' case in Donbass pits

At one pit in Donetsk, high wages and shrewd managers have kept up the flow of coal, Robert Seely writes. Next week's price reforms may end the reluctance to strike

FEW people in Donetsk, a city as dotted with slag heaps as others are with churches, believe that the Ukraine's month-long coal strike will end soon. Some think continuing democratic change in the Soviet Union depends on it.

Next week Moscow's long-awaited price rises for everything from furniture to food will push more than 100,000 striking miners in the Donbass region into an increasingly desperate and angry state. The increases may stimulate mines currently working, such as the rich Zasyadko pit in Donetsk city centre, to support the strike as miners see their living standards eroded with only the promise of 60 roubles (£60) a month in compensation.

As the miners at Zasyadko swapped shifts, the pit's working collective, a form of shopfloor democracy initiated after the 1989 coal strike, was meeting. The committee leader, Viktor Venjega, aged 38, was restraining angry miners who were demanding that the pit should join the other 58 in the Ukraine which are on strike. "We will give our support to independence for Ukraine," he said. "But demonstrations and protests can be organised after work. It is impossible to sack Gorbachev by striking — there is a constitutional way to solve these problems."

Amid tense exchanges, his deputy, Viktor Makarenko, told the miners and watching Communist party officials, expelled from most mines after 1989 but still tolerated here, that the future of democracy in the Soviet Union depended on the strike's outcome.

He argued: "If we lose this time, it could be the end for democratic reforms in the Soviet Union. There are brigades of workers in the mine who want to strike, and believe that this is right. I want a pit vote — it is time to make a decision."

Another miner shouted from the audience: "Where is the money from our work? We should have the cash and

decide how it should be spent ourselves. It will be difficult at first but better in the long run."

The meeting broke up without decision. The miners here have kept working because they say their management is efficient and the mine is rich enough to look after their needs, helped by a rare contract ensuring an average monthly wage at Zasyadko of 1,000 roubles for a coalface worker — well above the Soviet average of 400 roubles.

There are vacancies at many pits in the region but jobs are difficult to find at Zasyadko, which is powerful enough to ensure that its miners have the chance to purchase goods which are almost impossible to buy through normal channels, such as cars and video recorders, as well as supplying the produce for its pig and fur farms outside Donetsk to the miners at reduced prices.

Zasyadko's managers have also acted shrewdly since the strikes began. A stream of goods in short supply, ranging from shoes to apples, have been offered to miners almost daily at subsidised prices, and the pit's newspaper — every mine has one — has been banned from mentioning the strike.

"Glasnost has not been seen to the end here, many do not talk openly about the course of the strike," said Mr Venjega after the meeting. However, he believed that the men, despite their resentment at the attitude of Boris Yeltsin, the Russian Federation leader, who persists in trying to bring tension in the Soviet Union to a head, would soon be joining the strike.

He said: "It is likely that the mine will stop work. At the moment there is no one to lead a strike and people here do not want to lose what they have. I think that after April's price rises a leader may well appear."

Donbass's working class is a far cry from the loyal fighters for communism portrayed in the party slogans which still litter the city.

Kremlin summit for Peking party chief

FROM AGENCY FRANCE-PRESSE IN MOSCOW

JIANG Zemin, the Chinese Communist Party general secretary, will hold a May summit meeting with President Gorbachev in Moscow, Vitali Churkin, the Soviet foreign ministry spokesman, said yesterday.

Aleksandr Bessmertnykh, the Soviet foreign minister, will discuss preparations for the meeting in a visit to Peking beginning on Sunday. Mr Churkin said this was an official response to the visit by President Gorbachev to Peking in May 1989, which marked the normalisation of relations between the two communist powers after a 30-year ideological chill. That visit was overshadowed by the start of mass pro-democracy protests which ended in the mass killing of civilians in Tiananmen Square.

The effects of the thaw to date have been largely economic. A railway line has been opened across the border between the Chinese province of Xinjiang and Soviet Kazakhstan and new airline routes have been established. Soviet and Chinese officials have signed a basic protocol on the demilitarisation of the countries' joint 4,400-mile border,



Bessmertnykh: to visit Peking at the weekend

form programme, which it sees as the abandoning of socialism in Eastern Europe, but has made no comment on the Soviet Union's domestic problems. The Soviet leader, for his part, was extremely reserved about the crackdown on the pro-democracy movement in China.

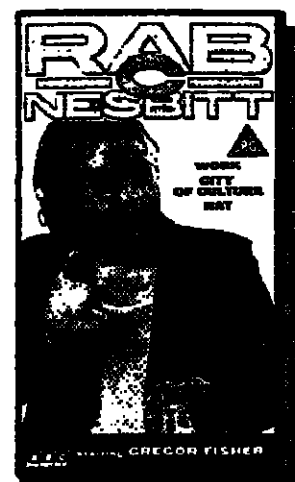
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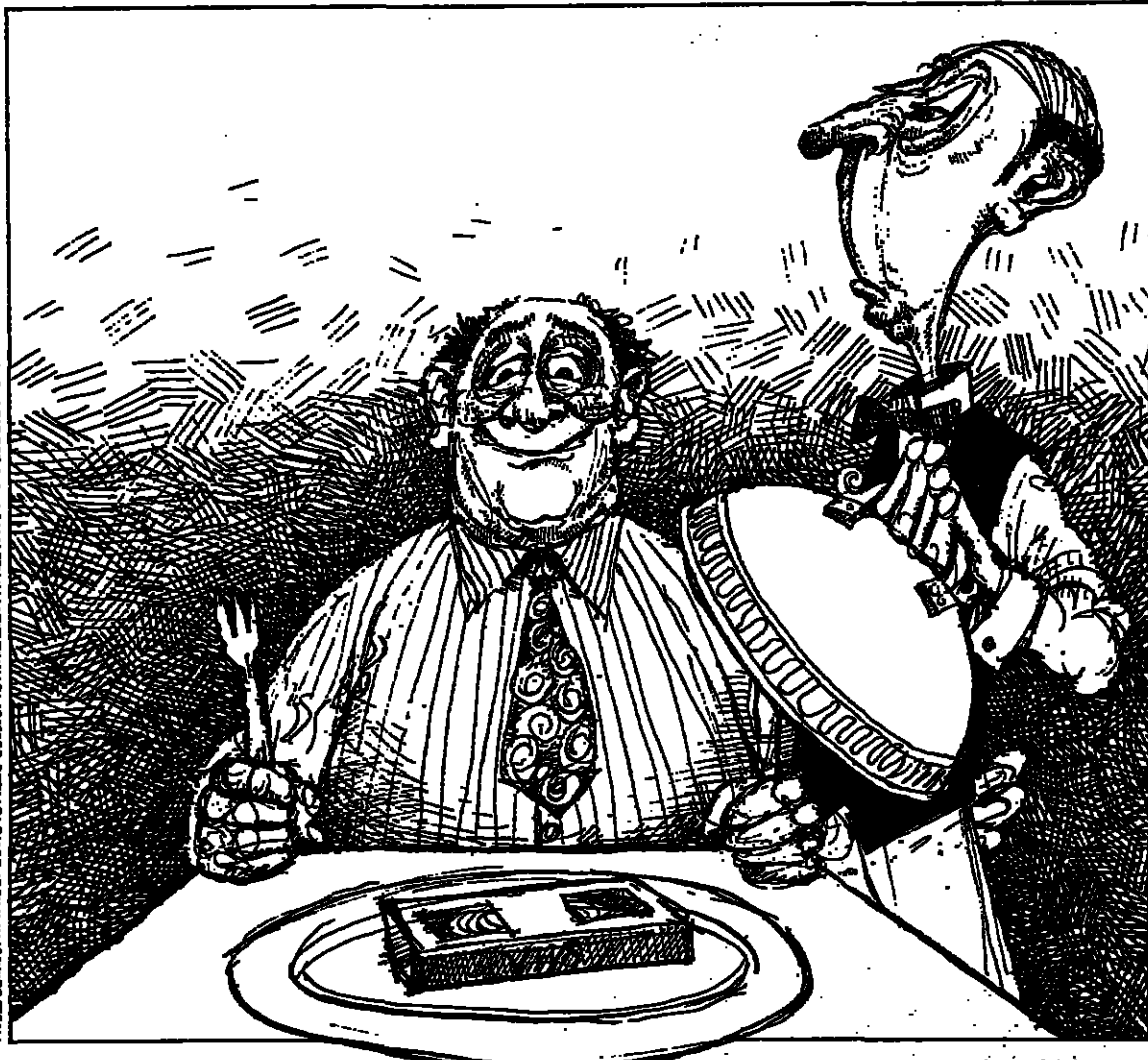
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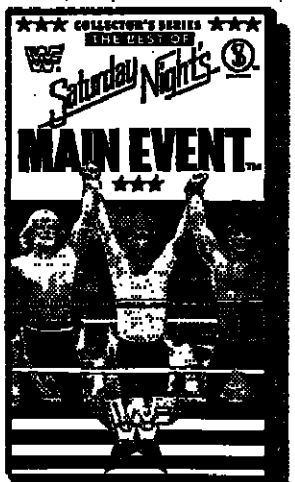
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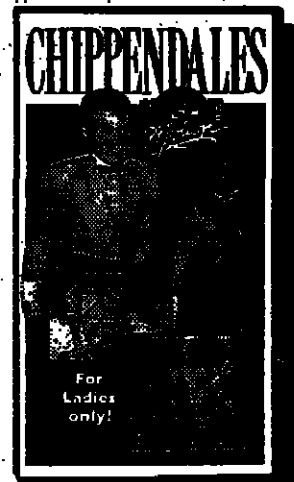
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Persecuted priest to be church head in Czechoslovakia

By ROGER BOYES, EAST EUROPE CORRESPONDENT

THE veteran primate of the Czechoslovak Roman Catholic church, Cardinal Frantisek Tomasek, has retired to make way for a senior bishop who, in ten years of persecution, was forced to work as a street cleaner and a librarian.

Cardinal Tomasek's decision to step down at the age of 91, announced by the Vatican yesterday, marks the departure of one of the shrewdest church politicians in Eastern Europe. He has been compared with the late Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, who defied tough Stalinist and post-Stalinist years.

The new primate will be Bishop Miloslav Vlk, aged 58, who will move from the diocese of Ceske Budejovice in southern Bohemia to become Archbishop of Prague. Like many priests outside the officially sponsored Pácm in Terezín organisation, he constantly stumbled against Communist authority. For many years, the Communist government refused to allow the Catholic church to fill vacant

bishoprics with their own candidates, instead putting forward men who were sympathetic to the regime.

Cardinal Tomasek, with the backing of the Pope, refused to give way and said he preferred the diocese to remain vacant rather than be run by collaborators. The result was that for a long time only five bishops ran 13 dioceses, and Cardinal Tomasek was a primate without a hierarchy.

Bishop Vlk belongs to a generation. During the 1970s he was banned from parish work and had to take various jobs offered by the state, including sweeping the streets and working in the municipal library. But the bishop is on record as saying that the street-cleaning job was spiritually rewarding.

Above all, it connects him with the current generation of politicians in Czechoslovakia, such as President Havel and Jiri Dienstbier, the foreign minister, who were forced to take labouring jobs after the Warsaw Pact invasion in 1968.

Bishop Vlk's key task will be to try to ensure that the Catholic revival in Slovakia, which was fuelled by last year's visit by the Pope when the Vatican resumed ties with Czechoslovakia, does not take on an overtly political form. Many Slovak Catholic activists are simultaneously fighting for independence from the Czechoslovak federation, a move that could seriously destabilise Central Europe if it were ever realised.



Vlk sweeping streets was "spiritually rewarding"



Prigun's progress: a disabled Spaniard in penitential robes joins Seville's Holy Week procession yesterday

Mitterrand rides high as Rocard slips

From PHILIP JACOBSON IN PARIS

WHILE President Mitterrand's Gulf war honeymoon with French voters continues, and a new poll puts his support today at its highest level yet, there are further indications that the Socialist prime minister, Michel Rocard, is in trouble. After losing four points in the popularity stakes over the past month, M Rocard won positive ratings from only 51 per cent of those questioned.

Since there was a slight increase in the number of voters who are generally satisfied with the way France is being governed, it would appear that M Rocard — whom Mitterrand obliged to keep a low public profile during the Gulf conflict — is being singled out for criticism.

Significantly, unemployment in France is still creeping up, with well over 2.5 million people out of work at the end of February: at 9.2 per cent, it is now higher than at any time since 1984. The short-term outlook for job seekers is every bit as bleak: government sources confirm that the official growth estimates for the economy in 1991 are soon to

be sharply revised downwards, and the prospects for next year are hardly more encouraging.

As if to underline the dismal outlook, the state-owned computer giant, Groupe Bull, yesterday announced staggering losses of 6.6 billion francs (about £650 million) for 1990. Unusually, Bull took out large advertisements in French newspapers to announce these dreadful results. "We could not have chosen a worse time to advertise," it announced.

Since the state-controlled Renault car concern has just reported a near 90 per cent fall in profits, M Rocard has quite enough gloom and doom on his plate. With his usual exquisite timing, Mitterrand, still glowing visibly after his "good war", told the nation that the prime minister should now concentrate on "getting us out of this mess".

● Guards held: Two private security guards were arrested yesterday after one of them allegedly shot dead an Arab youth at a Paris cafeteria, triggering three hours of rioting. (AP)

Italian coalition faces early poll

From PAUL BOMPARD IN ROME

ITALY'S 48th postwar government appears doomed after the Socialist party's formal demand for a full programme of reform rather than the cabinet reshuffle sought by the prime minister, Giulio Andreotti. Unless Signor Andreotti can construct a new government out of the five-party alliance, the country will face early elections.

The Socialists, led by Bettino Craxi, who with 14 per cent of parliamentary seats are key partners in the coalition, are demanding that the new government put fundamental reforms — including the direct election of the president — at the top of its programme.

Today Signor Andreotti will meet the secretaries of the five government parties — Christian Democrats, Socialists, Republicans, Liberals and Social Democrats — to assess the chances of forming a new government for the remaining 14 months of this legislature.

But Signor Craxi has said that, unless a strong programme can be put together, the only remaining path is elections.

Walesa snaps up editor's bait on pornography

From EVE-ANN PRENTICE IN WARSAW

JERZY Urban, Poland's impish official spokesman during martial law, is euphoric because he has been charged with pornography.

The man who used to be the word of communism made flesh has become Lord Gnome of Warsaw. He has founded a satirical magazine, a cross between *Viz* and *Private Eye*, which uses nude women and obscenity to snap at the heels of his political arch-enemy, the Solidarity leader and president, Lech Walesa. He says he has provoked the authorities into prosecuting him, and

intends to take the witness stand to ridicule the Solidarity-led regime further.

The charges against Mr Urban were brought after the weekly magazine he founded last October published a lurid, full-frontal nude photograph of a young woman with an amorous man lying at her side. The picture illustrated an article about the current Polish debate on whether to liberalise abortion laws, with a caption which asked whether the couple should face two years in jail if she underwent an abortion or 18 years as the consequences of having a child.

Mr Urban's case will focus on a far wider debate, however, about the ability of the budding democracy to cope with criticism. Mr Urban is using all his gifts as a propaganda expert to try to blacken Mr Walesa's reputation in the run-up to the country's first fully free parliamentary elections, which will be held by the end of October.

His magazine, *Nie* (No), regularly lampoons Mr Walesa and his family. It recently accused the president's 16-year-old son, Przemek, of drunkenness and rowdy behaviour in a nightclub. *Nie* carried a police report about the alleged unrest and claimed that the young Walesa had threatened to have the police who were called "thrown out of the force" if they acted against him. "We have informers in police circles," Mr Urban said darkly at the magazine's offices in Warsaw.

Nie, which has a 400,000 circulation, is a sell-out every Thursday and has enraged President Walesa. "We send him a free copy each week," said Mr Urban. "But he always sends it back in a chauffeur-driven car. We published a piece about this, pointing out that it must be costing much taxpayers' money to return it in this way. Should I be sentenced, the penalty will be small, say a £100 fine, but the advertising impact will be a million times that."

The president is known to find it difficult to cope with the press. Last year he threatened to ban all papers which were critical of his regime.

Poland in move to help Jews

From ROGER BOYES IN WARSAW

PRESIDENT Walesa, in an attempt to polish his international image, has promised to set up a government committee to investigate anti-Semitism in Poland.

The committee was announced yesterday, soon after Mr Walesa returned from the United States, where he met many members of the Jewish community, including the World Jewish Congress. The committee will include Jerzy Turbowicz, the respected editor of the Roman Catholic weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny*, and the historian Dr W. Ladyslaw Bartoszewski.

Mr Walesa came in for Western criticism during last autumn's presidential election campaign when he failed to muzzle the anti-Semitism of some of his supporters. In one comment about the Polish-Jewish intellectuals who were opposed to his candidacy, he said: "I have nothing against them — but why should they try to hide their origins? I am not ashamed of being Polish, and can prove my Polishness. Why should they be ashamed of being Jewish?"

Mr Walesa now seems to want to make amends, and pledged during his American visit to smooth relations between Poles and Jews.

Rally steps up pressure on Serb leader to quit

From DESSA TREVISAN IN BELGRADE

THE Serbian leader, Slobodan Milosevic, his position already weakened by popular protests earlier this month, suffered another humiliating blow from thousands of Serbs who filled the Freedom Square in Belgrade to step up pressure for the government to resign and to air their protests against his communist regime.

The demonstration, organised by the Serbian opposition, was intended to mark the 50th anniversary of monarchist Yugoslavia's renunciation of the pact with Hitler's Germany after which Yugoslavia was soon attacked, occupied and dismembered. The police kept away as the demonstrators kept on chanting

"Slobo-Saddam" and demanded that he resign.

The pressure for Mr Milosevic's resignation is gathering momentum and Vuk Draskovic, leader of the largest Serbian opposition party, the Serbian Renewal Movement, called for the resignation of the government, blaming it for the police brutality against demonstrators in which two people were killed on March 9.

Opposition leaders demanded that negotiations going on between leaders of Yugoslavia's republics on the future shape of the Yugoslav state should be held in public and told Mr Milosevic the nation would not accept any deals or bargains at their expense.

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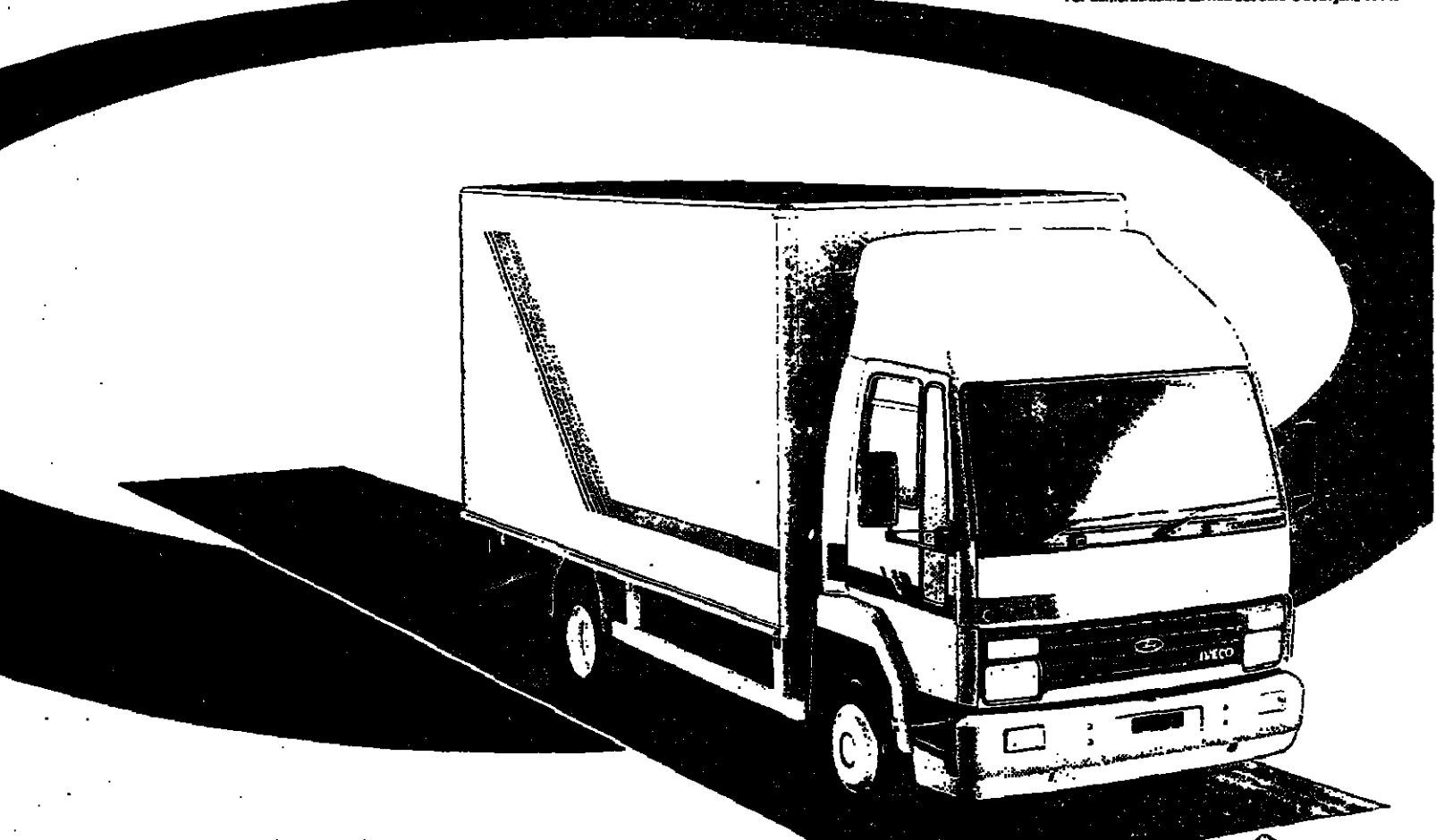
⁺Motor Transport 24th January 1991.
[†]Brevery Transport Advisory Committee, September 1990.
[°]European Community Directive 88/77/EEC.
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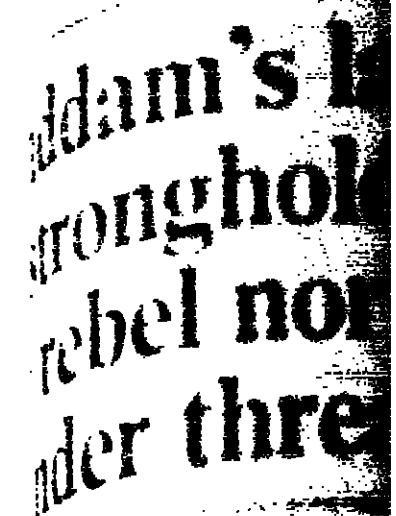
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هكذا عن الأصل

Saddam's last stronghold in rebel north under threat

FROM MICHAEL THEODOPOULOU IN NICOSIA

DESPITE attacks from government helicopters, Kurdish rebels said they were last night advancing on Mosul, Iraq's third biggest city and President Saddam Hussein's last stronghold in the north.

After wiping out pockets of government resistance on the way, they said they were only a few miles from the city, whose fall would give them complete control of northern Iraq. They planned to aid a popular uprising which had started in Mosul's Kurdish and Christian quarters, said Jalal Talabani, the guerrilla leader who returned to the region from exile on Tuesday.

There were reports that opposition leaders would form a provisional coalition government, which would be based in Mosul until the fall of

Baghdad and would try to win international recognition.

Kurdish guerrillas said they captured two Iraqi warplanes, a MIG21 and a Sukhoi bomber, and destroyed others when they captured an air base outside the rebel-held oil town of Kirkuk. They also overran a government army camp at Faardiya, on the road to Mosul.

Saddam's forces intensified their long-range shelling and aerial bombardment of northern cities, according to several opposition leaders. Syrian radio said Kirkuk remained steadfast "in the face of these bestial attacks". It said that, in the south, government helicopters dropped leaflets on the holy cities of Najaf and Kerbala "threatening residents with poisonous gases after the regime's forces released phosphoric acid and napalm bombs".

The Syrian and Iranian media, both committed to Saddam's overthrow, denied that the Shia rebellion in the south had been suppressed. Rebels controlled all the main cities by night and 300 Iraqi soldiers at a camp near Amarah were captured yesterday, they said. Shia Muslim opposition groups claimed rebels were staging guerrilla raids on government forces in Basra, Najaf and Kerbala.

The Iraqi state-run media scorned the notion that either Kurdish or Shia rebels had made advances.

Saddam, who swore in his new cabinet yesterday, gave ministers "six months at the outside" to prove themselves "at a difficult time" when "US aggression had been compounded by this reason by certain people". Saddam said he was pained by the unrest, but added philosophically that it "was a lesson in life".

The interior and defence ministers, charged with crushing the rebellion, did not attend the meeting. They were "on duty outside Baghdad", the Iraqi News Agency said.

Foreign journalists, ordered out of Iraq a month ago when the challenge to Saddam's rule erupted, will be allowed back in "to inspect the damage and destruction caused by the agents who have infiltrated from outside the borders", the agency said.

Refugees fight over food aid

FROM ASSOCIATED PRESS IN SAFFWAN

FOOD riots erupted yesterday in this hot, dusty border town filled with thousands of desperate Iraqis seeking refuge and political asylum.

Screaming elderly women and crying children were among the hundreds of people who scrambled on to Saudi Arabian food lorries and fought among themselves for meal packages thrown into the street by the refugees and Saudi soldiers.

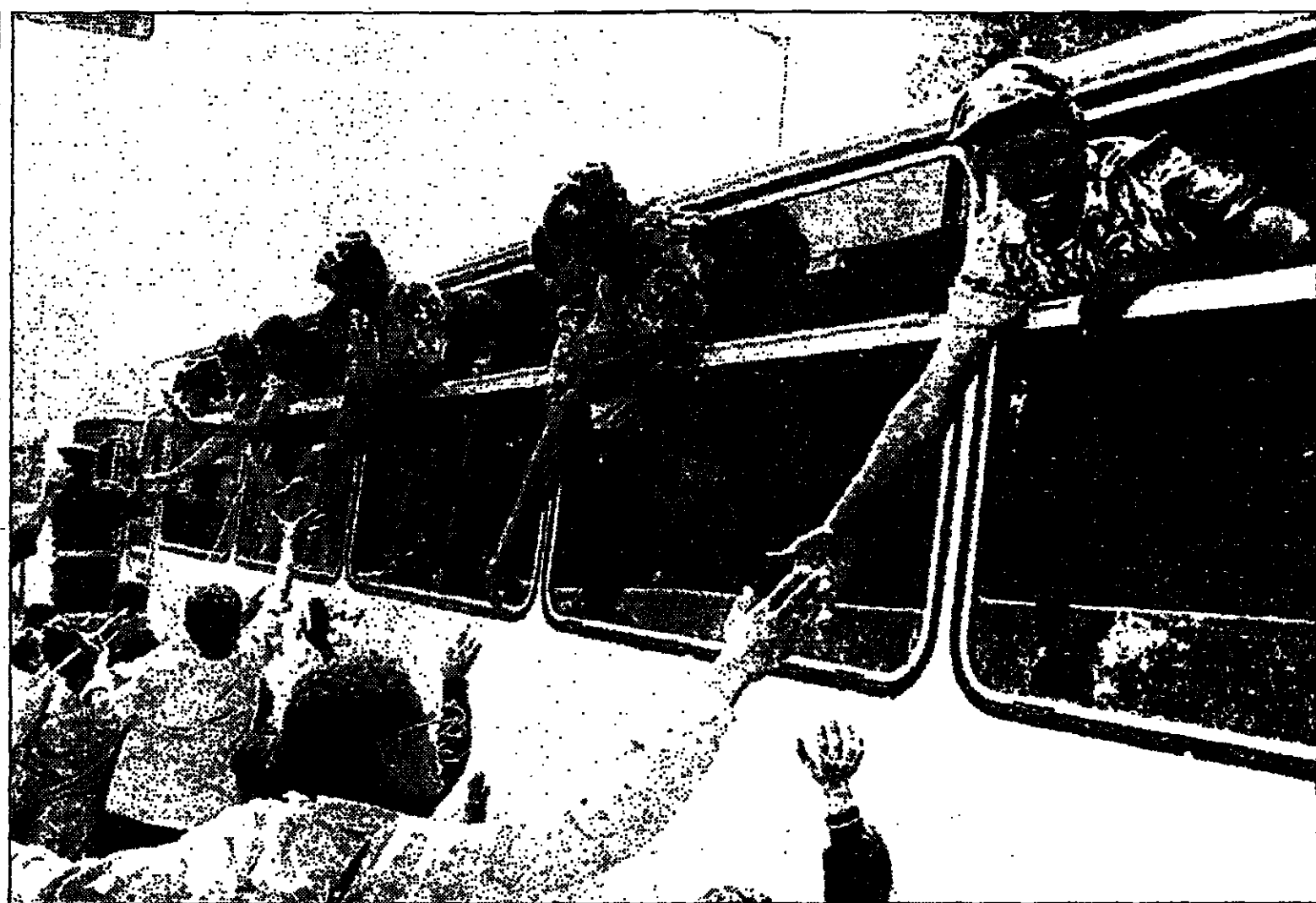
Major Youssef Ali Albouni, of the Saudi forces, said: "We tried to be organised, but the people are just too hungry. They see the food and they go crazy."

The lorries contained 25,000 meals, more than enough for the refugees, but the Iraqis piled on to the lorries while they were still moving. The Saudi soldiers fired into the air in a vain attempt that did nothing to stop the stampede for the boxes of bread, crackers, cheese and tinned food. There were no serious injuries yesterday, the fourth day of chaos at food distribution points in Saffwan, a war-torn town on the Iraq-Kuwait border.

The previous three days, the refugees stormed a post office and a school used by the American military to hand out water, flour and meal packets. The military abandoned the sites, moving yesterday to the grounds of a deserted construction company and calling in tanks to secure the area.

"The sense was that [the school] was too dangerous," said Lieutenant-Colonel John Kalb, of the US forces.

Civilians deserted Saffwan during the Gulf war, but thousands of Iraqis have been arriving daily as they flee from civil unrest in southern Iraq. Rebel groups, mostly Shia Muslims, took control of many southern cities early this month in the aftermath of the war. But the Republican Guard of President Saddam Hussein have recaptured all the main cities, using tanks, heavy artillery and helicopters dropping napalm.



Local heroes: Cairo schoolchildren greeting Egyptian soldiers returning yesterday from their successful campaign against Iraqi forces

Ceasefire draft permits Iraq to use jet fighters

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

THE draft ceasefire resolution prepared by the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council would allow Iraq to start using fixed-wing military aircraft against rebel forces as early as next week. The text also contains a loophole which would permit the allies to maintain sanctions on non-essential imports to Iraq, such as radios and other consumer goods, until President Saddam Hussein relinquishes power.

These and other implications of the draft came to light yesterday as the ten non-permanent members of the security council began studying the complex 20-page text presented to them by the five powers - Britain, China, France, the Soviet Union and the US. Among the less obvious effects of the draft resolution is the fact that Iraq will be able to resume its use of fighter aircraft against Kurdish and Shia rebels.

The draft declares that a formal ceasefire will come into effect as soon as Iraq accepts the provisions of the resolution. That could come as early as next week, when the resolution is expected to be adopted by the security council.

Although Western diplomats doubt that Baghdad will convey its acceptance immediately, they note that once it does allied forces will no longer have UN authority to shoot down planes over Iraq. "A ceasefire is a ceasefire," a senior Western diplomat said yesterday. "They cannot go on shooting things down."

The draft resolution also contains a loophole, apparently inserted deliberately by the Americans, allowing allied governments to block non-essential imports into Iraq until the country is no longer considered a threat to international peace and security. Diplomats suggest that the terms of the resolution permit the allies to maintain the embargo on non-essential imports as long as Saddam remains in power.

Sanctions on food shipments would be lifted immediately and essential supplies, such as generator fuel and agricultural goods, would be allowed through the embargo if approved by the UN sanctions committee. The ban on Iraqi exports, mainly oil, will be removed when Baghdad has destroyed all its weapons of mass destruction and agreed to set aside part of its oil revenues to pay war compensation - both of which should happen 90 days after the adoption of the resolution. But sanctions on non-essential imports are to remain indefinitely, subject to review every 60 days by the sanctions committee "in light of the policies and practices of the government of Iraq".

The sanctions panel, a sub-committee of the security council, works by consensus, enabling any one of its 15 members to block a decision.

Fresh troops will be sent to Gulf

BY MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN is to send a "battle group" of 1,500 soldiers to Kuwait next month to replace the 4th Armoured Brigade, which is due to return within the next few weeks. The fresh troops are expected to stay until June.

The decision to send replacement troops was announced yesterday in the Commons by Tom King, the defence secretary. A squadron of Tornado GR1s would also be left on deployment in Bahrain "for the time being".

The announcement followed increasing concern over the delay in fixing a permanent ceasefire with Iraq. Mr King wanted to maintain the programme for withdrawing the bulk of the 1st Armoured Division, but it became clear that British troops would have to stay in the area for longer than originally planned.

The 1,500 replacement troops will come mainly from Germany. The battle group

will consist of the 2nd Battalion Royal Anglian Regiment, based at Celle, in Germany, 31 Battery of 47 Field Regiment, Royal Artillery, from Thorney Island, in Sussex, and D Squadron of the 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards, from Paderborn in Germany. The soldiers will take over the tanks and guns of 4th Armoured Brigade.

Mr King said, in a written answer, that there was no intention of having a permanent ground force in the area. About 28,000 out of 45,000 troops would have returned home by the end of this week.

The main withdrawals would be completed by mid-April. Up to 5,000 personnel would stay behind in Saudi Arabia to organise the return of equipment and stores, which would take several months. The Ministry of Defence said that the 1,500 soldiers would be involved in desert training in Kuwait.

Israeli ministers split on security

FROM PAUL ADAMS IN JERUSALEM

THE Israeli government yesterday failed to agree on new security measures after a spate of attacks on Jewish civilians by Palestinians.

On Tuesday night an Israeli settler in the West Bank was killed when unidentified gunmen ambushed his car north-west of the Arab town of Ramallah. Yair Mendelson, aged 30, was the seventh Israeli to die in the latest wave of attacks. The six others were stabbed to death inside Israel.

Yesterday's special session of the inner cabinet foundered on different proposals for responding to the violence. Ronni Milo, the police minister, presented a plan to prevent unmarried Palestinian men aged under 30 from entering Israel. The plan calls for heavy fines on Israeli employers who hire Palestinians without work permits.

The proposals have met opposition from the defence establishment, which fears that the army will have to bear the brunt of dealing with rising numbers of disgruntled, unemployed Palestinians.

Moshe Arens, the defence minister, said yesterday that the army was already too stretched to deal with the extra checks needed to put Mr Milo's plan into operation.

Mr Arens proposed continuing with deportations and the immediate demolition or sealing of offenders' houses. Israel has tried both, with little evidence of success.

Yitzhak Shamir, the prime minister, told the two ministers to agree on a set of proposals before a cabinet meeting next week. Further deportations are likely to incur American displeasure. Washington has condemned the expulsion orders issued at the weekend against four Palestinians from the Gaza Strip.

● Killer jailed: An Israeli military court yesterday sentenced a Palestinian to ten life terms after he was convicted of killing and attempting to kill people suspected of collaborating with Israelis.

Hisham Mohammad Ashkaki, aged 20, from Khan Yunis in the south of the Israeli-occupied Gaza Strip, killed six Palestinians suspected of collaborating and tried to kill 11 others, court documents said. (AFP)

Iran may free jailed Briton

By NICHOLAS WAIT

THE Iranian government said yesterday that it could soon release Roger Cooper, the British businessman imprisoned in Iran.

Javad Larjani, Iran's national security adviser, told the BBC that his continued detention was an embarrassment for his government. He said: "My prediction is that his release shouldn't be very far from now." He suggested that Britain should request a reduction of the sentence.

"We have a judicial procedure, on several occasions a year we cut the sentences of convicted people."

Mr Cooper, aged 55, was imprisoned five years ago on charges of spying. His trial was held in secret and his sentence has not been disclosed. He has

since been held, mostly in solitary confinement, in Evin jail in Tehran. He was last seen outside prison on Iranian television in February 1987.



Cooper: detention is an embarrassment to Tehran

when he confessed, under duress, to having links with the British intelligence service. The Foreign Office has always protested his innocence and yesterday a spokesman demanded that he be released immediately.

Earlier this month the state-run Tehran Times suggested that Mr Cooper might soon be released, in response to Britain's decision to drop charges against an Iranian arrested for a series of arson and bomb attacks on shops selling Salman Rushdie's novel, *The Satanic Verses*.

British-Iranian diplomatic relations - severed after Britain objected to Ayatollah Khomeini's *fatwa* to kill Rushdie - were restored last September.

Kuwaitis haggle over new cabinet

FROM JAMIE DETTMER IN KUWAIT CITY

THE crack of a pistol shot nearby hardly disturbed the whispered conversations. A few heads looked up momentarily towards the sound when it was reinforced by a burst of automatic gunfire. The muffled sound of a buzzer from a room used by the crown prince for his meetings provoked more interest, but no one in the cloistered courtyard was summoned.

Instead, a downcast former Speaker of the suspended National Assembly appeared and took his leave of the crown prince briskly. Muhammad al-Adhali's departure suggested that yet another late effort to bring the government and opposition factions together had failed.

A buzz went around when three members of the Muslim Brotherhood arrived to talk to Sheikh Saad al-Sabah. "He hopes to entice them away from the opposition and into the government," an adviser said. Earlier this week talks with opposition politicians broke down after Sheikh Saad insisted that if any were appointed ministers then they would have to stop criticising the government.

There are few institutions more hallowed in the family-based politics of the Gulf than the *diwaniya*, or *majlis* as it is known in Bahrain and Dubai. *Diwaniya* is a word for a

courtyard, but it is also used to describe the regular open meetings at the house of a notable where all, if they are male, can come to give advice, air a grievance or discuss events.

On Tuesday night the crown prince's *diwaniya*, which breaks with tradition by not being open to all-comers, was reminiscent of the lobby of the House of Commons. Members of Kuwait's ruling al-Sabah family, ministers, government advisers and prominent businessmen, stood in the courtyard and sat on benches around the sides exchanging ideas. Who should be in the cabinet the crown prince may announce today?

Groups formed and dispersed as newcomers arrived. Gleaning limosines pulled up outside, adding to the ever-swelling crowd. The ponderous form of Sheikh Saad al-Sabah, crown prince and prime minister, could be seen through the open window of the tiny room that serves as his office. "He's having difficulties in getting people to join the cabinet," said a minister. "Who wants to be in a short-term cabinet that will have to step down after an election in six months or a year? Who wants to be in a cabinet that faces so many problems?"

Servants soft-footedly served cardamom-flavoured Arabic coffee from tall brass pots. A short shake of the cup indicates that you do not want a refill. More than one refill is considered bad

manners. Men sitting cross-legged on the wide benches suddenly stood up. The crown prince shuffled out of his office and into a large, long and sparsely furnished room bordering the courtyard. Others followed and sat in plush, silk-covered armchairs along the sides of the room.

Senior members of the al-Sabah family seemed defensive and receptive to new ideas on Tuesday night. "The Midland Bank government," quipped a colleague. "The listening government."

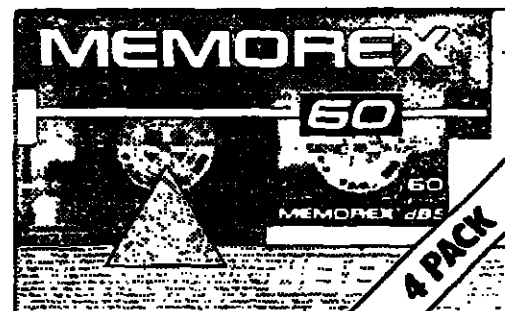
There was much concern at the *diwaniya* about the continuing arrests and beatings of Palestinians. "We are worried and want to calm things down," a minister said. "There is much hatred for the Palestinians now. Palestinians have guns and are good fighters. We do not want any more trouble here. I tell people that most Palestinians who collaborated with the Iraqis have gone and the ones who have not have made a conscious decision to stand by Kuwait."

The old ministers also seemed confident that they had turned a corner and that disaffection in the emirate would now decrease. The restoration of electricity to more areas in the city is at the root of this optimism. But a resistance leader at the *diwaniya* said: "Things are going to change around here. They must. And the al-Sabahs have got to realise it."

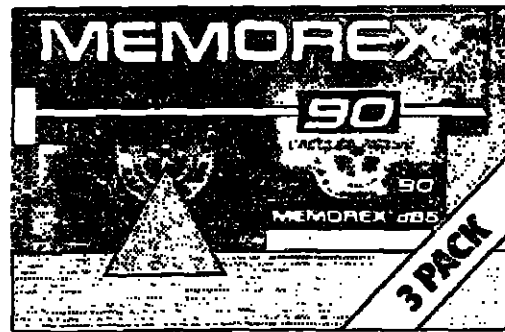
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WOOLWORTHS

Gunmen kill 15 at township funeral vigil

From Gavin Bell in
Alexandra Township

GUNMEN opened fire yesterday on mourners at a prayer vigil in Alexandra township, near Johannesburg, then hacked and stabbed survivors with pangas and knives, leaving 15 dead, including nine members of the bereaved family, and 18 seriously wounded.

Many victims were teenagers, but among them were a girl, aged eight, and a baby of nine months, who was shot in the stomach during the unprovoked attack on the black community.

Relatives said the Swazi-speaking family had no formal ties with the African National Congress, but their area had been taken over in recent weeks by Zulu supporters of the Inkatha Freedom Party. They said the attackers smashed through a flimsy wooden barricade outside their house shortly before dawn, then broke down the door and shouted in Zulu: "Inkatha! Didn't you know we were here?" They then opened fire with AK47 rifles and revolvers on people sleeping in two rooms.

Survivors said they had telephoned the police the previous evening and asked for protection, after seeing a group of men in the area acting suspiciously. Police came to the house, but ignored



Parting sorrow: mourners leaving after the killings forced the cancellation of the funeral in Alexandra township

pleas to leave a guard, they said. Later, about 20 men wearing khaki uniforms and military-style caps arrived at the house and six broke in.

Police confirmed that they had received a call for help, but denied that they had been asked to maintain a security presence. "We responded immediately, but there was no sign of such a group," a spokesman said. "We were not approached to remain at the vigil or provide protection, but decided to intensify

patrols in the area. One of the patrols had been in the area ten minutes prior to the attack, but nothing irregular was found."

Church and ANC leaders who visited the scene of the killings blamed the government, the police and a mysterious "third force" for the deaths. The Rev Frank Chikane, the secretary-general of the South African Council of Churches, denounced apartheid for creating a culture of violence, and said: "I

am disgusted. If the government cannot stop this senseless killing, it should not be there. We need a government which cares for its people."

Dr Chikane, who is trying to arrange peace talks among community leaders, had no satisfactory answers for a middle-aged man, oblivious in his grief to the churchmen around him. The man cradled his head in his hands and moaned repeatedly: "Why, why, why?" Half a dozen members of the ANC executive com-

mittee, led by Alfred Nzo, the secretary-general, condemned the police for failing to protect the family and blamed unidentified "forces opposed to democracy" for orchestrating township violence with the aim of weakening the ANC.

They refrained from implicating Inkatha, with which ANC leaders concluded a peace agreement in January. But it is clear that, despite occasional meetings, joint mechanisms intended to avert such murderous incidents

have not been established. Popo Molefe, the ANC branch chairman in Alexandra, said his organisation had submitted names for a committee with Inkatha representatives, and it had asked for a meeting today.

Such belated peace moves are no comfort to Fani Maphanga, aged 31, who lost nine members of his family and six friends in the attack. He said they had been mourning the death of his sister Jane, aged 41, who was shot in the neck by Zulus who broke into the same house two weeks ago.

Yesterday, Mr Maphanga and friends were sitting around a fire outside the house, where a tent had been erected for the vigil. When the gunmen came, everyone scattered and four of his sister's children ran into the house. "I heard one of the men shouting 'Inkatha' before the shooting began, then I ran to the police station for help. But they said I must go back alone." Mr Maphanga said the family was not politically active, although some youngsters belonged to the Congress of South African Students, which is allied to the ANC. "My sister belonged to only one organisation, the Catholic Church."

The anger roused was expressed by a middle-aged woman who shouted at a television crew: "I will never forget, and I will never forgive a Zulu in all my life."

Bhutto denies connection with hijackers

By ZAHID HUSSAIN IN ISLAMABAD AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

BENAZIR Bhutto, the former prime minister of Pakistan, has firmly denied that her Pakistan People's Party was involved in the hijacking of a Singapore Airlines plane on Tuesday.

The hijackers had demanded the release of Miss Bhutto's husband, Asif Ali Zardari, and several other imprisoned leaders of the party. The outgoing foreign minister of Pakistan, Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, said the men had offered to give up if they could talk to Miss Bhutto, but officials failed to reach her by telephone.

Commandos in Singapore stormed the Singapore Airlines aircraft at dawn yesterday and shot dead the four hijackers after a nine-hour incident. All 123 passengers and crew were rescued.

It was disclosed in Kuala Lumpur yesterday that Malaysian airport security officials knew the four men were carrying knives when they boarded the aircraft, but they were allowed to do so, "as under international aviation laws they are allowed to carry certain types of knives", Ling Liong Sik, the transport minister, said in Kuala Lumpur.

Air passengers were permitted to carry knives less than four inches long. Zolkipli Abdul, the senior Malaysian senior airport security official, told a press conference. Mr Ling said the knives used by the hijackers were probably pen-knives. They checked in at Kuala Lumpur international airport in Subang between 7.46pm and 7.48pm on Tuesday, Mr Ling said. They had no hand luggage and sat together in the same row in economy class.

Yoe Ning Hong, the deputy defence minister of Singapore, said the commandos seized the Airbus A310 "in a matter of minutes" in the assault. Richard McGovern, aged 48, a businessman passenger from Sydney, said: "These guys weren't playing games. They carried in their hands things that looked like huge firecrackers and knives. They poured cognac around the plane and threatened to ignite it." Officials confirmed that the cockpit, cabin floor and some passenger seats were doused with alcohol.

At her home in Larkana, Pakistan, Miss Bhutto said none of the four hijackers belonged to her party. Faruk Leghari, a party spokesman, has accused the government of conspiring against the opposition. He said the hijacking was plotted by the intelligence bureau. The government was planning to ban the party and might use the incident to justify its action.

Mian Nawaz Sharif, the Pakistan prime minister, has appointed a committee under Shujaat Hussain, the federal home minister, to investigate the hijacking. A government spokesman said that the hijacking had proved that the PPP was a terrorist organisation, but denied that the government was planning to ban the party.

Sahabzada Yaqub declined to comment on the allegation, but he said that all attempts to talk to Miss Bhutto failed because a loyal member of her staff did not want to wake her. However, Sahabzada Yaqub said Pakistan was happy with the operation by Singapore

commandos in ending the hijacking and saving the lives of the 123 hostages.

"This was a decision the government of Singapore had to take," he said. "The government of Pakistan is against all acts of terrorism. We are glad that so many lives of innocent hostages were saved."

Miss Bhutto said that no government should ever give in to terrorism. "We are not linked at all with the hijacking. We don't want a single member of the Pakistan People's Party or Asif Ali Zardari to be released through any act of terrorism because we don't believe in terrorism."

Mr Zardari is being held in a Karachi jail while standing trial for extortion, abduction and conspiracy to murder his wife's political opponents.

Pakistan foreign chief quits

From Reuters in Islamabad

SAHABZADA Yaqub Khan, the veteran foreign minister of Pakistan, sent his resignation to Mian Nawaz Sharif, the prime minister, on Wednesday last week and has not been to his office since. Sahabzada Muhammad Khan, the foreign secretary, the senior diplomat of the foreign ministry, said yesterday. No successor has yet been named.

Sahabzada Yaqub, aged 69, a former army general, had held the office for about a decade under the late military ruler, General Muhammad Zia, and three subsequent civilian prime ministers.

Last month, the minister signalled his wish to step down when he told Mr Sharif during a trip to China that he would not seek re-election to the Senate (upper house) for personal reasons. In Pakistan, a minister must be a member of one of the two houses of parliament. Mr Sharif said at the time he had agreed to the request.

The formal resignation came after Sahabzada Yaqub's senate term ended on March 20, the secretary said.

Sahabzada Yaqub was seen by critics as responsible for Pakistan's pro-American foreign policy. His first appointment as foreign minister by Zia was from 1982 to 1987. He was reappointed in November 1988, after a 12-month break, and had remained in office since. He was widely regarded as a confidant of the military in the three civilian cabinets that followed Zia's presidency.



Sahabzada Yaqub: leaving for personal reasons

Parents demand retrial

Peking - The parents of Chen Ziming, aged 38, jailed for 13 years as a mastermind of the Tiananmen Square demonstrations in June 1989, have written to China's supreme court calling for a retrial for their son and his colleague Wang Jintao, aged 32, convicted of plotting to overthrow the government, according to sources (Catherine Sampson writes). "We are greatly angered and disappointed by this extremely unjust decision," wrote Chen's mother, Wu Yongfeng. The Peking high court has rejected an appeal by the men against their sentences.

Chemical claim

Bangkok - Phnom Penh government radio has accused Cambodian guerrillas of using chemical weapons, for the first time in the 12-year-old civil war, during an assault in northwestern Battambang province. The offensive was repulsed, killing five rebels and wounding ten. (Reuters)

Island suffers

Sydney - Desperate islanders on Bougainville in Papua New Guinea are stealing clothes from corpses, an Australian aid worker says. The government cut off trade and services after rebels took over the island last year. An aid team found that malaria had caused many deaths because of lack of medicine. (AP)

Cholera strikes

Jakarta - At least 20 Indonesians have died and hundreds are in hospital in a suspected cholera outbreak in the northern Sumatran province of Aceh. A newspaper quoted a health ministry official as saying the epidemic began two weeks ago. (Reuters)

Victory for Roh

Seoul - The Democratic Liberal party of President Roh of South Korea swept local council elections, dealing a blow to the opposition before the general and presidential polls which are due next year. (Reuters)

Bullied to death

Tokyo - A court here has awarded £16,500 in damages to the family of a boy who committed suicide after two schoolmates bullied him. School authorities said the pair made him dance in class with his face painted and often made him run errands. (AFP)

Swelling ranks

Taipei - The Taiwanese defence ministry is to raise the weight limit for military service, to beat the draft-dodgers. One newspaper said the limit might go as high as 16st 7lb. Young men binge for weeks to try to beat the present limit of 13st 7lb. (Reuters)

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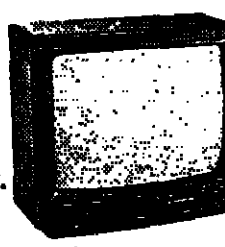


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Gourmet delights: but will Britain's new food hygiene regulations merely serve to harden the brie and close the door on many small businesses?

Cheesed off consumers hit by the chill factor

New British food hygiene rules have displeased gourmets, health officers and businesses, Robin Young reports

Expect at any moment a flow of bitter complaints and scare stories about the unforeseen consequences of new food hygiene regulations dreamt up by interfering Brussels bureaucrats. And do not believe a word of them.

Our half-baked new food regulations are home-grown — like our scary succession of food scandals involving listeria in cook-chill foods and salmonella in poultry and eggs, *E. coli* in hamburgers and botulism in yoghurt.

The regulations come into effect on April 1. Many small shopkeepers, caterers, restaurants and publicans fear the regulations will put them out of business, because they cannot afford the refrigeration equipment needed to meet the requirements or because their premises cannot accommodate it.

Environmental health officers, who will enforce the regulations, take an equally pessimistic but totally opposed view. They believe that the regulations will be largely unenforceable. Food enthusiasts have gloomily predicted that the public will be deprived unnecessarily by the nanny state of treats such as runny soft cheeses and craft-baked flans, which have been enjoyed for decades or even centuries without ill effects, and that they may never see again such delicacies as *salade tiède*.

On the other hand, Professor Richard Lacey of the microbiology department at Leeds University, who has done more than anyone to draw attention to the dangers posed by salmonella, listeria and similar nasties, dismisses the regulations as "unbelievably lax and downright dangerous" because they concentrate on the temperatures at which food may be kept without stipulating how long it can be kept for.

The Food Hygiene (Amendment) Regulations slipped quietly into law on the eve of the summer recess last year under powers conferred in the 1984 Food Act. They accompany, but do not form part of, the 1990 Food Safety Act, which was sponsored by the Ministry of Agriculture,

Fisheries and Food, and which considerably extends and strengthens the powers of enforcement officers to inspect, seize and detain food if it is a risk to health.

The food hygiene regulations, on the other hand, were dreamt up by the health department, not to conform with any EC directives or other international standards, but as an effort to redress a departmental reputation sullied by food poisoning outbreaks. Some of the most publicised of those had occurred in the department's hospitals.

The regulations will require many perishable food products (soft cheeses, soured cream, custard, etc.) to be stored at temperatures below 8°C. From April 1, 1993 foods

classified as "potentially microbially hazardous" (particularly those, such as ripe, cut soft cheeses, and cooked products containing meat, fish and eggs, which have already been associated with salmonella and listeria, and smoked or cured meat or fish) will have to be stored and transported at under 5°C. That is a temperature low enough to stop runny brie in its tracks for ever, but it applies only after the cheese has been fully ripened and cut.

As originally drawn, the regulations would have wiped out the mail order business in smoked salmon and smoked meats, threatening some 400 small companies, many of which had received government encouragement to set up in the first place. When that came to MPs' attention, about the time many of them were getting their own Christmas deliveries of goodies by post, a U-turn quickly followed.

On February 21 Stephen Dorrell, under-secretary of state at the health department, announced that foods delivered by mail order would be exempted to allow more time to "develop practical means of achieving necessary controls". As far as mail order foods go, then, the regulations have been put on ice.

That the Institution of Environmental Health Officers points out, sets up a perfect example of double standards. Smoked meats and smoked fish are exempt throughout the period they are in the mail, though if they were in catering premises of any sort — restaurants, cafes, pubs, railway buffets — they would be subject to the legislation.

The other well-publicised exemption from the regulations wrung from Mr Dorrell on February 21 illustrates the confusion even more vividly. The National Association of Master Bakers had mounted a national campaign and collected 250,000 petition signatures to "Save the Fresh Custard Tart". Storage at low temperatures made the arts rubbery and unappealing, it claimed, and the tarts were safe anyway since they were freshly baked each day and thrown away if not sold.

Mr Dorrell duly announced in February that baked egg products could go unrefrigerated so long as they were sold within a day of manufacture. The curious thing about that, the health department now admits, was that fresh custard tarts were not within the terms of the regulations at all before Mr Dorrell's announcement. The regulations as originally drawn did not apply to uncut baked egg products. They were brought in for the first time by the February announcement which gave them benefit of the time exemption.

"It shows how confusing this legislation is going to be," says Mike Corbally, the assistant secretary of the Institution of Environmental Health Officers. "When some foods have to be kept under 5°C and some under 8°C there will be all sorts of difficulties about knowing which food should be in which cabinet." As reported in *The Times* yesterday, "intelligent" packaging that will automatically flash up a warning or turn black when its food contents have been subjected to temperature variations or tampering, may eventually provide better protection.

The environmental health officers' view is that the new regulations will have little effect on preventing food poisoning because they are poorly drafted, excessively complicated and full of loopholes. Raw meat and raw fish, for example, are not covered at all. There is nothing in the regulations to stop them being sold at uncontrolled temperatures from market stalls or butchers' forecourts, building up bacterial loads which increase the risk of cross contamination or eventual food poisoning.

Cooked pies, meat pasties and sausage rolls, high-risk products which have been linked with food poisoning outbreaks in the past, are all exempt from temperature controls if they are intended to be sold within 24 hours of preparation. Intention, the health officers say, may bear little relation to what happens in fact, particularly when the food passes from a producer to a retailer. Whose "intention" is relevant? And is the "time of preparation" when the product is mixed, cooked, packaged, or when it leaves the factory?

There are exemptions, too, for displays of hot foods intended for sale within two hours. If people know the food has in fact been held for more than two hours are they still permitted to offer it for sale? For dairy-based desserts the regulations refer to the pH (acid) level of the food, be-

cause acidity inhibits microbial growth. But how are vendors or enforcement officers supposed to know what the pH is? Will the products have to be analysed — and in the case of layered desserts will that be layer by layer?

It has been estimated that it will cost £300 million to bring Britain's refrigeration units and food distribution vehicles up to scratch to meet the regulations' requirements. No wonder food sellers, particularly small businesses, are worried.

But there are 420 fewer environmental health officers now than there were ten years ago, we are about 300 trading standards officers short, and we certainly have not heard the last of food poisoning.

MEDICAL BRIEFING Dr Thomas Stuttford

The power to calm

DESPITE a generation of feminism, most women still look forward to a traditional wedding; but for those who suffer panic attacks (two-thirds of sufferers are women), the thought of being marooned on the altar steps with a crowded church behind them and no easy escape route epitomises everything that strikes terror into their hearts. Churches, theatres, the Underground and busy streets are the obvious places which can induce an attack, but any crowded place away from the patient's own house may be enough to cause profuse sweating, a racing heart, hyperventilation, chest pain and dizziness.

The patients feel that their heads and hearts are pounding to a point at which they must explode, and that they would prefer to faint rather than suffer what they see as an inevitable heart-attack or stroke.

Patients who have experienced panic attacks become cautious in what they undertake, so that their life becomes increasingly restricted. In severe cases they



High anxiety: helping hand on a "fear of flying" course

may venture out only if they can do so in the security of their own car.

Pulse magazine reports that doctors at the Charing Cross and Westminster, and Maudsley hospitals are conducting a trial on a new drug, Brexazolam, which may settle an attack before it becomes established, as it is absorbed in less than five minutes from under the tongue. It does not seem to become addictive. If the usefulness of Brexazolam is proven, it may replace the use of long-term tranquilisers in the treatment of panic, and spare patients the risk of habituation or

even addiction; it may also ease the work of behavioural psychologists in their endeavour to teach patients to confront and overcome panic-inducing situations.

Although two-thirds of the people who suffer repeated panic attacks have agoraphobia, a fear of open spaces, any situation, including air travel, examinations or tense social occasions, may bring on an attack. Many American physicians regard panic disorders as a separate entity, whereas in Britain they are more usually thought of as a symptom of other psychiatric troubles.

Labelling confusion

IN THE days when dogs were still allowed in the gardens behind Holy Trinity church on Brompton Road, west London, Ava Gardner, in her old age, could be seen walking her corgi, accompanied by a servant. By this time her short-term memory had become so bad that she found it impossible to remember where she had been, or whom she had been with, an hour or two after she had left them. It was generally accepted that she was suffering from Alzheimer's disease, although others, less kind, suggested that too many drinks at too many parties may have hastened her intellectual decline.

To doctors and their patients the cause of dementia is not merely a suitable cocktail party chatter, but is of the utmost importance. At the moment between 10 and 30 per cent of cases labelled as Alzheimer's are misdiagnosed; many are, in



Forgetful: Ava Gardner

fact, due to the multi-infarct syndrome (multiple small strokes), or some other cause which might well be treatable, but once the fashionable label of Alzheimer's has been applied, the diagnosis is rarely questioned. *General Practitioner* magazine reports that research is well advanced into the development of a diagnostic process which will measure the amount of ubiquitin, a marker for Alzheimer's, in the cerebrospinal fluid. If successful, this will make accurate diagnosis possible without brain biopsy or waiting for a post mortem.

HRT without any trouble

HORMONE replacement therapy (HRT) for women as they approach the menopause is becoming an accepted part of preventive medicine. In suitable cases it reduces the risk of osteoporosis and of heart and other cardiovascular diseases, as well as sparing women middle-aged depression, genital dryness and the embarrassment of hot flashes and breathlessness.

There is a price to pay for all this, however; the present pills on the market cause a monthly, menstrual-type bleed. The pharmaceutical manufacturer, Organon, has said that on April 10 it expects to launch Livial (tibolone), the first HRT treatment which does not cause bleeding.

Doctors expect patients are more likely to comply with their prescribed treatment if, as they get older, women can retain their youth, but discard the tampons which have been one of its less desirable features.

Will dairy desserts have to be analysed layer by layer?

Mr Dorrell duly announced in February that baked egg products could go unrefrigerated so long as they were sold within a day of manufacture. The curious thing about that, the health department now admits, was that fresh custard tarts were not within the terms of the regulations at all before Mr Dorrell's announcement. The regulations as originally drawn did not apply to uncut baked egg products. They were brought in for the first time by the February announcement which gave them benefit of the time exemption.

Reaching an adaptable age

BREATHING SPACE Lady Helen Brook

I AM 83 now, and very healthy. I have never had anything severe, like operations. My mother breastfed me until I was 12 months old, so I had a good start. I am a family planner. The Brook Advisory Centre [she founded the first in 1963] evolved when I was a voluntary worker for the Family Planning Association, working for a clinic in Islington. I started in about 1952. At that time there was no contraception for unmarried people at all, and very little help for anybody with sexual problems, because sex was not something anybody ever mentioned.

I have always lived an abstemious sort of life — I do not smoke or drink excessively, or do anything excessively. I do not eat much meat. If I lived alone and never went out, I would be a vegetarian, but I cannot live that kind of life.

I am a very early riser. I sleep badly, I often do not go to sleep before 2am, then



Lady Brook: still healthy at 83

I have to force myself. I am awake again about 6. I have tea and two digestive biscuits at 7.15. Then I'll have a small cup of coffee around 11, fruit like a banana and a pear for lunch, then in the evening something like a vegetable quiche, and a small whisky and soda. At the beginning of the war my GP told me to have a little whisky to push my blood pressure up.

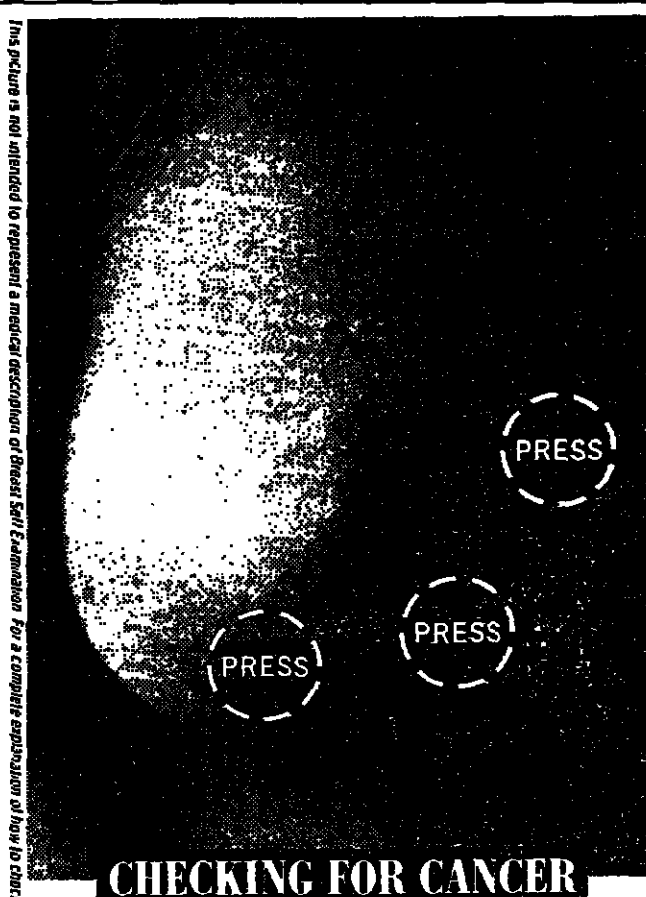
I do not go out by myself very much. I

can no longer walk from Munich to Venice, which I did once. I do three classes a week: two lots of music and one keep-fit. I go to lectures and concerts. In my music class the people are in their eighties, and what interests them in life is their health. I don't really go on about my health.

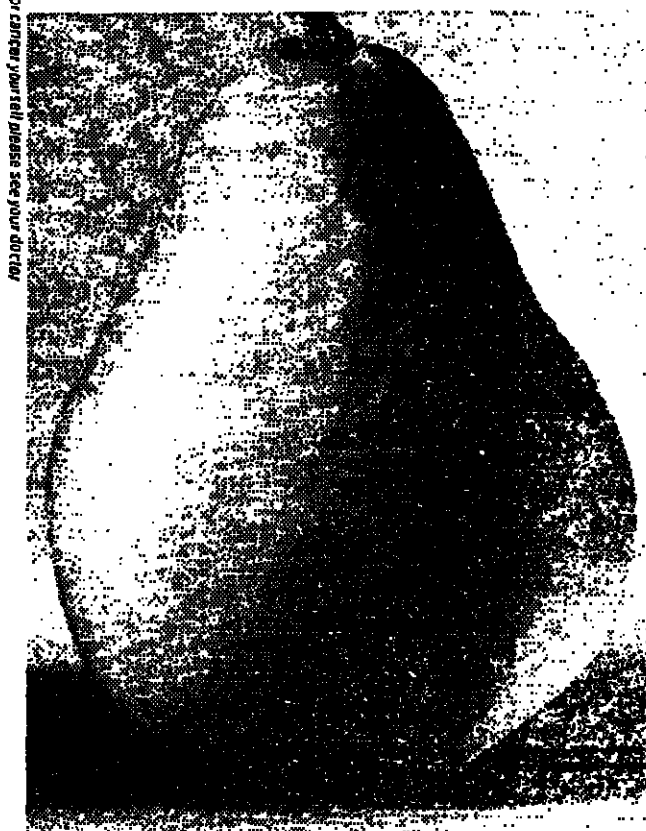
I have always had enormous energy, but in 1974 I suddenly went downhill a lot. I started to dwindle. I was on holiday with my daughter and grandchildren. I fell over and realised I had not seen the step. I had my eyes tested and the chap said I had advanced glaucoma. I was told that in nine months I would be totally blind. I had an operation at Moorfields Eye Hospital, and they were wonderful. I do not know what they did, but now, all these hundreds of years later, I can still see a bit, which is something. I see through a mist, a bit at a time.

I have adapted to old age, but I think it's a total bore, totally awful. I wouldn't recommend it to anyone. But I am happy in myself.

Interview by Pamela Nowicka
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CHECKING CANCER

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Stopping cancer before it starts

A pact between man and nature

The bill for medicines has worried governments since the National Health Service started. So, not surprisingly, the NHS reforms coming into play next Monday include the latest attempt to restrict the family doctors' drugs budget of £3 billion a year.

Doctors have recently argued in the medical press over economical prescribing. They see irreconcilable conflicts between the pressure to offer the cheapest therapy and patients' expectations.

The health department's fresh drive for cost-effectiveness is enshrined in a scheme known as Prescribing Analyses and Cost (Pact). This entails quarterly reports on all Britain's practices and is intended to show doctors how they compare, in value for money, with their colleagues.

However, the preparatory work on Pact has revealed the complexity of the drugs business. If the analysis is to be genuinely comprehensive, more than 35,000 established drugs and herbal and homeopathic remedies covered by the Medicines Act have to be reviewed.

In addition, 600 new products are licensed every year. Most are refinements to established medicines, but 10 per cent are based on new active ingredients from natural plants or microbes, synthesised in the laboratory, or, more recently, obtained by culturing cells genetically engineered to secrete biologically active molecules.

As creating useful new compounds by traditional chemistry becomes harder, the search has intensified for natural products

Scientists looking for new drugs are turning the clock back, reports
Pearce Wright



Richard Sykes: 1,500 recruits

that can be reproduced in the laboratory. For example, at Glaxo's west London research centre a natural products discovery department has been set up to screen soil and plant samples. The pharmacologically interesting items screened by the team, working with Dr. Mike Hayes, include many bacteria and fungi isolated from soil samples. If this fascination with natural products produces a better medicine by the

end of the decade, drug development may be about to repeat a cycle that began 5,000 years ago.

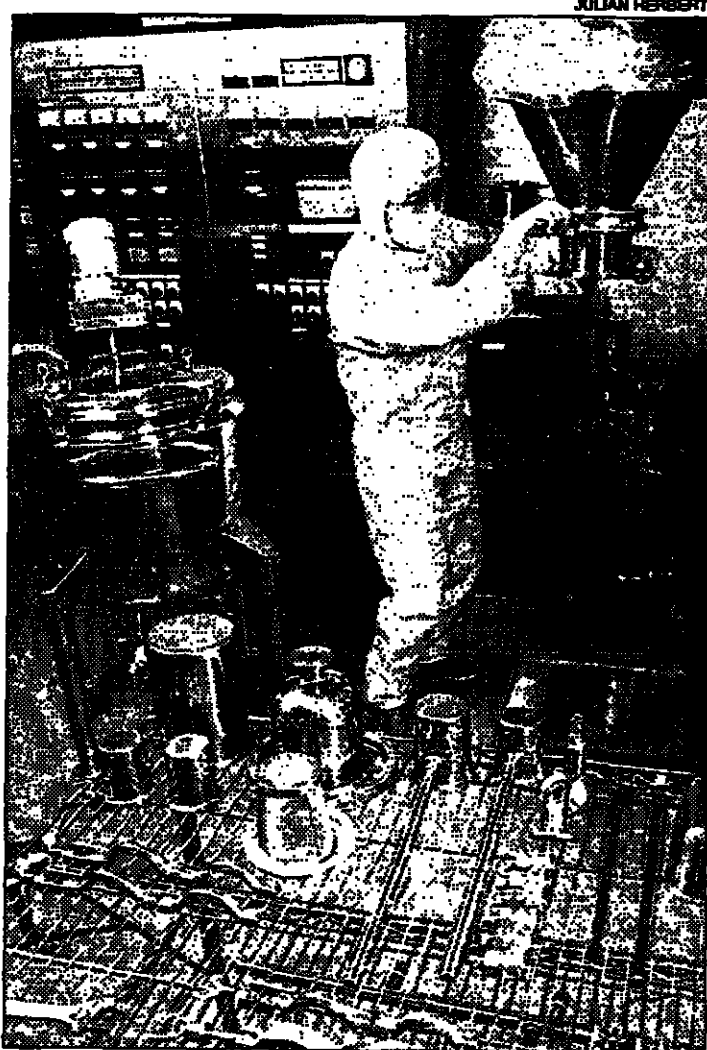
Two of Glaxo's latest prescription medicines, Serevent and Flixonase, promise important improvements in asthma and hay fever treatment respectively. They result from modern biochemistry, but they also illustrate a change in the process of discovering potential new drugs, developing them and getting them to the market.

Dr Richard Sykes, the research director, says asthma treatment can be traced to early Chinese herbal medicines based on extracts from the Ephedra plant. Modern techniques were needed to identify the active ingredient as ephedrine, a substance similar to adrenaline.

Dr Sykes says: "The main stages of creating a new drug, the discovery of a potentially useful new molecule and its development into a medicine, are quite different activities. Drug developers know precisely where they are going and that most potential new products will fail during testing."

"In contrast, in the research leading to discovery, scientists know what they want but not how to get it. Opportunities turn up by chance, and, when recognised, are exploited. Most important drugs have been found in this way. It is laborious and costly, but a more rational approach is spreading, and the beta-agonist, anti-asthma compounds are an example."

Rather than making an interesting new agent and wondering whether it has some effect, today's approach looks first at vulnerable tissue to identify a chemical molecule, or receptor, that pro-



Therapy in the making: drug production at the Glaxo factory

vides a target for the potential drug. Modern asthma drugs get their name because they link with beta receptors on smooth muscle in the airways. In the long-sought Serevent, the active molecule spans two receptors, one called a beta-2 site and the other an epsilon, to block the reaction.

Since 1986, Dr Sykes has recruited more than 1,500 scientists, mainly for development and pre-clinical testing of potential

new chemical entities for cancer chemotherapy, heart conditions, disorders of the brain and nervous system, gastric and intestinal conditions, infectious and respiratory diseases. Substances that survive screening go on to the longest stage of the ten-year process in getting a new drug to the market. This involves testing for safety and effectiveness, before trials in volunteers, on which the submission for a licence will be made.

Key to finding a right number

From next Tuesday directory enquiry phone calls will cost 43p. But there are other options

Computerised alternatives to British Telecom's directory enquiry service will attract increasing attention from next Tuesday, when 43p will be charged for every enquiry call.

Subscribers living in Hull, where the telephone system is run by an independent company, Kingston Communications, will continue to get a free service. So, too, will people using public payphones nationwide.

Businesses that use the service heavily are likely to find their telephone bills rocketing. Those that do not use the service should see bills drop by about £10 a year.

BT's answer for those using the service heavily has been to provide two computerised alternatives: Phone Base, which links BT's database direct to a terminal or personal computer, and Phone Disc, which uses a 5in compact disc. High prices and the need for special equipment, however, will restrict their use to business. Home use is likely to be limited to people who already have a personal computer and modem.

As France discovered, such potentially extensive applications can be used to boost the use of a technological system generally, if the price is right. When France Telecom started an electronic directory enquiry service it gave away terminals worth £100, or leased them at heavily subsidised prices. The result is that more than four million terminals are now in use. France Telecom's savings from being able to reduce the number of directories printed partly offset the cost. The company also received a government subsidy, with the lofty aim of making people more computer-literate.

The service, called Minitel, included other information, al-

though, as predicted, four out of five calls when the service began were to get a telephone number.

As the numbers using the service reached millions, thousands of information providers, who offer a huge range of services, from airline and hotel booking to home shopping and lonely hearts services, paid France Telecom to rent access to the database. France Telecom benefited from the increased traffic and revenue.

BT's equivalent, Frestel, has fewer than 100,000 users and because of the cost of the equipment to connect to it, and the subscription charges, it is mostly limited to specialists such as travel agents. Although Frestel now has a directory enquiries service, it is not expected to bring in many more subscribers.

One alternative, Phone Base, costs between 6p and 13p a minute, depending on the time of day. This should be long enough to get a number, although for the occasional slow user, the cost will double.

The nearest solution is Phone Disc, which stores 17 million names, addresses and numbers on a 5in compact disc. Subscribers will receive a new updated disc every three months, but will have to buy a CD reader costing about £500. However, the charge for four discs a year - which now cost about £1 each to manufacture - will be £2,200, and the information must not be sold to a third party. To make it worthwhile, users will need to find 17,000 numbers a year. BT says the cost is high because the data on the disc needs to be scrambled to prevent users finding a name and address from a number.

MATTHEW MAY

Police clock on to satellite time-keeping

A STRING of American military satellites 21,500 miles above North Yorkshire is being used by county police to create an emergency communications system for the next century. The geographical positioning satellites are designed for navigation by groups such as yachtsmen and surveyors, and were used by allied troops during the Gulf war.

What has attracted the police are the satellites' nuclear clocks, precise to fractions of a second, which can be detected on the ground. The North Yorkshire police, like other forces in Britain,

is keen to build on existing technologies rather than buy new ones to develop their communications networks.

The idea of using the satellite clocks comes from Alistair Brydon and Tony Yarwood, British Telecom researchers at laboratories in Ipswich, Suffolk.

The satellite clocks, picked up by receivers on nine hilltop sites in the county, allow the police to synchronise radio communications between patrols and their headquarters, using part of the existing telecommunications network. Without the clocks, messages

could sometimes be garbled, leading to potentially dangerous delays in responding to incidents.

A new network is needed because, by 1996, the 40 police forces of England and Wales are to lose some of their radio spectrum as part of government measures to boost the resource for mobile communications, including car and portable phones.

The move means that fixed UHF and VHF radio communications between a police headquarters and the transmitter stations, which relay messages to patrol officers, will be lost.

One possible solution would have involved the installation of microwave transmitters and receivers at the county's nine sites, but at a cost of about £1 million. "We considered them old technology," says Supt. Geoff Garbutt, head of information technology at North Yorkshire police.

Instead, researchers were asked whether Megastream, an existing land-based network, could be used by the force for telephone and data communications, and adapted to provide links to the hilltop transmitters. The problem is that the network has a failsafe device,

which causes transmissions to be automatically retransmitted should a fault occur or servicing be needed. But unless each of the hilltop transmitters receives and relays signals at exactly the same time, messages can be cancelled. They then become unintelligible.

The solution has been to install delay equaliser, controlled by the satellite clocks, which ensure that no matter how often the network re-routes, each hilltop site receives and transmits the radio signal at the same time.

NICK NUTTALL



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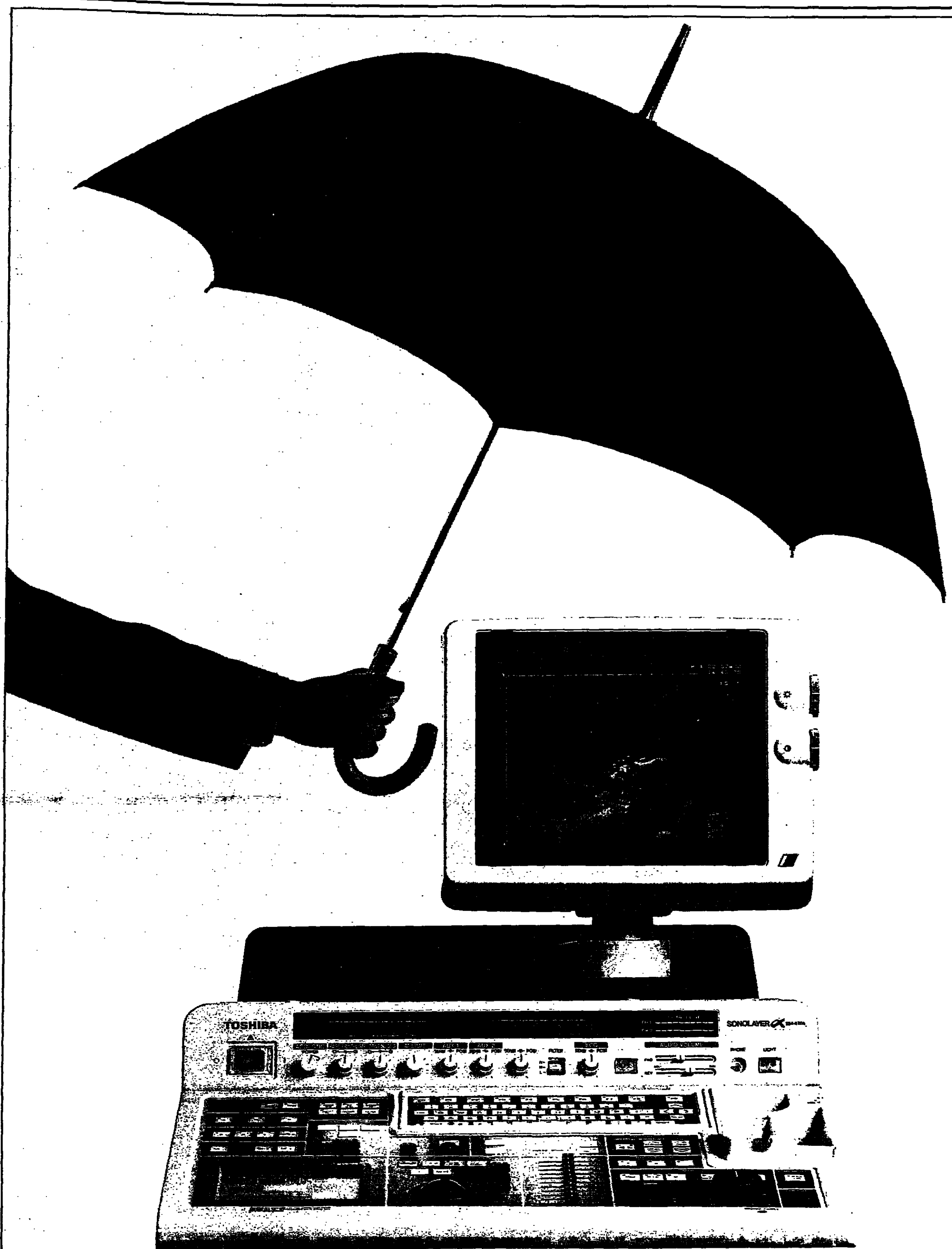
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Farewell to an admirable fixer

Michael Binyon judges Sir Charles Powell one of the great private political secretaries

Sir Charles Powell left Downing Street on Tuesday after almost seven years at the prime minister's side. He must rank as one of the more remarkable private secretaries of modern times. Urbane, articulate, courteous, a man of definite views and intelligence behind a self-effacing facade, his influence reached way beyond his job title as foreign and defence private secretary. He helped shape British policy in a way few other civil servants have done. His departure changes the balance of decision-making in the government, and coincides with the round of ambassadorial musical chairs that marks the end of an era in the Foreign Office — and thus in Britain's foreign relations. He stayed so long by Mrs Thatcher's side that he became inextricably associated with all she stood for, at home and abroad. After her fall, he stayed on long enough to guide John Major skilfully through the build-up to war when continuity in Downing Street was most needed. When he closes the door to No 10 for the last time, he will switch out the light on the Thatcher era.

Sir Charles was plucked from the Foreign Office by Mrs Thatcher in 1984, at a time when she was ill-informed and ill at ease in foreign policy, and relied, certainly for her first two years, on Lord Carrington. But right from the start she had definite views on Europe, on the Soviet Union, on relations with America. Sir Charles's influence lay in his loyalty to her views, and his ability to summarise diffuse discussion in sharp memoranda. His personal views were clearly close to hers.



Sir Charles: a silky touch

Within months he had made them hers. He was, more than anyone apart from Sir Bernard Ingham, her alter ego. He had her confidence because she knew that decisions he took — and he took many — were her decisions.

In such a job, everything depends on personal relations. Many in the Foreign Office resented Sir Charles's influence and long tenure. But their resentment was really directed at the prime minister. Sir Charles lasted so long because she needed him. She wanted Downing Street to take control of policy. If he had sided with his Foreign Office colleagues in the ceaseless battles, notably over Europe, that marked her relations with the diplomats, he would simply not have lasted.

He also reinforced her prejudices. Mrs Thatcher liked the Church of England as an institution and the Foreign Office as people, but not the other way round. She did not like open government, and the Foreign Office, for all its stuffiness, wanted to bring its own expertise into Downing Street foreign policy. Sir Charles was the interpreter of her wish to sharpen up the Foreign Office and question its innate continuity. Many diplomats found it hard to get past Sir Charles. Shrewd ones maintained a channel to him separate from the official conduit through departments and foreign secretary. Many

did not know how much they had been helped.

Sir Charles did much to persuade Mrs Thatcher to compromise with the FCO view when she had to advise the cabinet on her bete noire Sir Geoffrey Howe. On a number of occasions he turned around her views. Her attitude to the Soviet Union underwent a deep change for which Sir Charles must take some credit.

Her length of tenure eventually left her lonely in No 10. Sir Charles's closeness, as well as the warm relations Mrs Thatcher developed with his fiercely loyal Italian wife Carla, led to what seemed to many a mother/son relationship, in addition to that of monarch/courtier. Just as her views became increasingly dogmatic and discredited in Europe, so his role was magnified and reviled. He was known throughout Europe, having attended every summit with her. He never shared her unpopularity. But his detractors could not have hoped for a more humiliating — and unfair — gaffe than the leaking of his minutes of the Chequers discussion last year on Germany.

His departure inevitably means a swing back to the Foreign Office in the balance of power. Stephen Wall will take over at No 10, intelligent and qualified but advising a different prime minister in different circumstances. To some observers, Sir Charles's office could have retained its power — and possibly the FCO as effective a lobbyist — if Mr Major had appointed Sir Robin Renwick, Britain's ambassador to South Africa, instead of allowing him to move to Washington.

Would this have worked? Could the post have taken on more of the role of the American president's national security adviser?

The Foreign Office, understandably, would have been uneasy. Sir Robin would have come in at a much higher level than Sir Charles, continuing a policy that effectively reduced pluralism in decision-making. Mr Major is clearly happy at present to leave the bulk of policy-making to Douglas Hurd. Mr Wall, therefore, will not be asked to play the same role as his predecessor, and foreign policy-making may revert to more traditional lines.

But traditional lines mean old tensions returning to the surface in moments of stress. The modern prime minister is more and more the articulator of British policy at European councils, at summits in Washington and Moscow and at direct meetings with fellow heads of government. As he develops expertise and confidence, he will want to make up his own mind with his own private advisers. However good his relations with Mr Hurd, tensions could grow. Mr Wall may be forced to play more of a Powellite role than nowadays seems likely.

Sir Charles straddled the change of premiership with the usual silky grace. People change, the FCO goes on as usual. Only rarely does a Sir Charles Powell come along to leave such a lasting imprint.

Conor Cruise O'Brien believes the UN can help Washington build a new world order

Does Pax Americana start here?

This week's agreement of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council on the subject of Iraq confirms the present international ascendancy of the United States. In the course of the Gulf war, America has emerged as not only *primus inter pares* among the permanent members, but as their effective leader. The 12 resolutions passed — like this week's agreed draft — were all broadly in accord with American specifications, though subject to bargaining, and the final resolution legitimised the allied military action.

For some American policy planners, these developments open up an attractive prospect of the UN providing the diplomatic and juridical framework for a global Pax Americana. No responsible person talks in public about anything of the kind — on the contrary, the idea must be disclaimed whenever suggested by an outsider — yet the idea is around. For President Bush, as for any American president, the idea is tempting, and for solidly practical reasons. If a president who has a difficult choice to make on international affairs can show that his chosen course has UN approval,

which is thought of as constituting "world opinion", then he holds a trump card that will aid him in domestic politics too.

The idea of "a decent respect for the opinions of mankind", cherished by the Founding Fathers, has blended historically with the idea that the opinion of mankind should reciprocally demonstrate a decent respect for the United States. For the first 13 years of the UN's existence, America under Truman and Eisenhower used the organisation as a standing demonstration of mutual respect to the American public, this approximated Pax Americana.

In those early years, Washington's influence over the UN was expressed mainly through the general assembly. As long as the two superpowers were at loggerheads, the security council was unable to reach decisions because they required the consent of all the permanent members. But the Truman administration found, most clearly during the Korean war, that the blessing of international opinion could be obtained from the general assembly, where the US could count on two-thirds of the votes.

In August 1958, a decisive

change occurred. An emergency session of the general assembly on the American and British landings in Lebanon (after the July revolution in Iraq) failed to approve an American draft resolution. That had never happened before. And from that moment the general assembly ceased to be the moral conscience of mankind.

For about 30 years, until 1988, America was obliged to play down the significance of the United Nations, since it could rely neither on the security council nor on the general assembly. But the need for "decent respect" would not go away. The fact that no UN blessing was ever available for the Vietnam war was among the reasons for the widespread revulsion to it among Americans.

The Reagan-Gorbachev rapprochement of the late Eighties began to open up new vistas. The negotiations that led to the end of the Iran-Iraq war saw for the first time a UN secretary general who had the full support, throughout his mission, of all five permanent members of the security council. When Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait Mr Bush decided to appeal to the emerging consensus in the security council, and did so

with outstanding success. It is natural that he should wish to build on this precedent. A "new international order", to the extent that it could be achieved, would be a Pax Americana exercised in concert with the security council.

Such an outcome in global politics is not undesirable. A Pax Americana of this type would be not so much an extension of American power as a regularisation of its use. It would require the US to consult others, and listen carefully to their views — as happened with this week's draft resolution of the five — before embarking on any international matter involving the possible use of force. Had these procedures been followed, the Vietnam war might have been avoided.

I hope, therefore, that the security council consensus attained over the Gulf war may be consolidated and cautiously extended. But it cannot be assumed that it will be. The consensus could not have been achieved without Mikhail Gorbachev, and the meaning of "Gorbachev" as a political term was changing rapidly even after the invasion of Kuwait. There are many disturbing signs. Edward Shevardnadze,

the former Soviet foreign minister, again warned this week against "dictatorship".

Mr Shevardnadze was speaking about the forces that worked against his own foreign policy of rapprochement with the West. The prime minister Valentin Pavlov, who produced that fantastic riddle about a Western plot against the Soviet currency, is still in office, with something other than rapprochement presumably in mind. This week's Kremlin decision to use Interior Ministry forces to prevent a Yeltsin rally scheduled for today in Moscow is only the latest in a series of sinister developments this year. The possibility of a Soviet Tiananmen Square begins to loom up.

A reversion to the cold war — or even a more dangerous form of it — remains possible. And we should not ignore, as we often do, the ticking in the heart of Europe of an enormous political-military time-bomb: the remaining presence, in unified Germany, of 400,000 Soviet troops. The consequences of a breakdown in the present consensus in the security council are beyond calculation. So we shall be lucky if Pax Americana can hold up.

Hurricanes hardly happen

Bernard Levin finds the chapter of accidents small, the book of life large, and advises us to relax

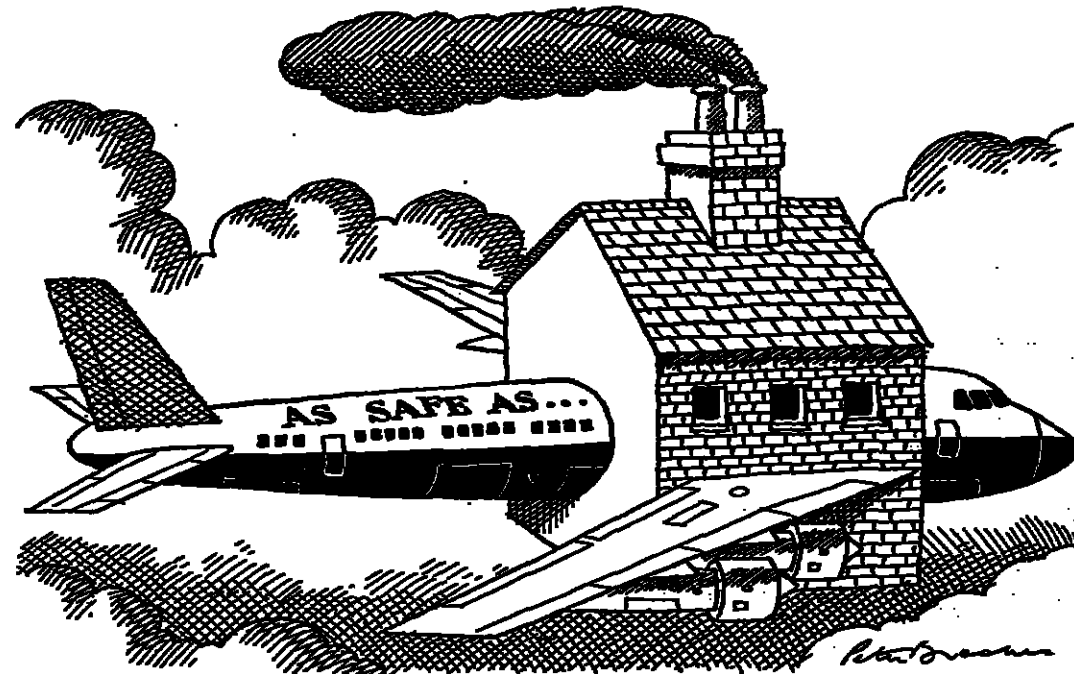
A notable headline in the *Financial Times* recently read "Lockeair inquiry points to lapse in airport security". Well, yes, I suppose it would, really.

Here, our first duty is to cherish the Pest Factor. The pest in this case was Dr Jim Swire, whose daughter was one of the 270 people murdered by the Lockerbie bomb. Instead of mourning her and leaving it at that, Dr Swire dedicated himself to finding out the truth of the events leading up to the crash — and perhaps even more important — the truth that followed; and he went to his work with application, relentlessness and suspicion until he managed to make so superfluous a nuisance of himself that the truth eventually did transpire, in the conclusion that the blame rested with Heathrow as well as Frankfurt — a conclusion that those in charge at Heathrow had disputed to the last.

It will be said that Sheriff Mowat, who was in charge of the inquiry, would have revealed all in due course, perhaps, but that does not invalidate the great and important contribution of Dr Swire, who went about banging dustbins when others wanted to sleep. (What, incidentally, is the honour list for?)

Sheriff Mowat himself managed to carry out his enquiry with commendable dispatch, which is more than can be said for the Lord Advocate, who is in charge of the criminal investigation. This has so far cost £2.5 million and taken something over two years, and his department has just said that it is going "extremely well", though where it is going extremely well is not revealed.

But that said, I have to add the depressing news that aircraft safety is, and always will be, an illusion. (And I must add, as I write on the day of the Hillsborough disaster inquiry, so is safety everywhere else.) The last time I was due to board a plane at Heathrow, I put my hand-case into the x-ray machine and walked through the scanner. I could see the security official watching the



screen to see if something suspicious would show up; or rather, I could see the official not watching the screen to see if something suspicious would show up, but that there was only one in nine million chance that there were two bombs on any such plane; ever thereafter, he contrived to take a bomb on every plane he boarded. Well, something like that operates all the time, independently of mad scientists.

We learn from the enquiry that the fault was a failure to match the fatal suitcase to its owner, both at Frankfurt and at Heathrow (where it was trans-shipped) it went aboard without anyone being certain that the owner had not scurped. Very well, from now on, all cases shall be matched to travellers. Yes, but what do you do about the TWA girl who a year or two ago was supervising the transfer of luggage to another plane but could neither speak nor understand English, and so contrived to send my suitcase to

Detroit, when I was hoping that I and my suitcase would both be going to Los Angeles?

Airport security, just as much as the manufacture of currant buns, is done by human beings; that being so, they will make mistakes. So let it be with aircraft security. The form of Sod's Law I like best goes like this: "If, in any piece of machinery, a part can be fitted the wrong way round, sooner or later someone, somewhere, will fit it the wrong way round." That means that from time to time a mistake or a momentary inattention will ensure that a bomb will be put on a plane and it will blow the plane to pieces, just as it means that from time to time a batch of currant buns will be found to be composed largely of salicylic acid, which is believed to be useful for treating rheumatism but certainly does not notably improve the taste of a currant bun.

This is a troubled and imperfect world; many horrible things accidentally happen to the people in it. But the glory of the universe is that to any one person at any one time, the chances of any such thing happening are so few that they are virtually non-existent, and for all reasonable practical purposes can be entirely ignored.

So let it be with aircraft security. But if you refuse to let it be, just remember the Tallulah Bankhead sketch in which she is an airline hostess comforting a nervous passenger. "Will we crash?" he keeps saying. "Will we crash?" "No, no, no," she says, "it's been proved that planes are the safest way to travel — they hurt a smaller proportion of people than any other form of transport." He perks up a bit. "Really?" she says. "Sure," she says, "didn't you read about that terrible train wreck last week?" "No," he says, "what happened?" Tallulah pats his shoulder and says: "A plane fell on it."

...and moreover

CLEMENT FREUD

On Saturday afternoon I was quietly going about my business at the Grafton point-to-point, which takes place in a natural arena near Banbury in Oxfordshire. On the way to the paddock for the fifth race I looked down to see what my size ten Wellington boot had inadvertently kicked and discovered a small, leather-covered, faded-purple box such as might contain a jewel or small bracelet. I glanced around and gleaned I was unobserved, that no one had deliberately placed the box in my path, that Cilla Black was not hidden behind a parked Land-Rover to shout "Surprise surprise, this is your granny's wedding ring." Picked it up, folded the box into *Sporting Life*, and after viewing the horses on parade took it to my car for inspection.

Who would take a jewel box to the races and drop it in the grass? Might this contain the gift I could bestow on my younger son's fiancée to mark their marriage on what would be Hitler's 102nd birthday next month? For how long must one hang on to something before it constitutes stealing by finding? These and other pertinent thoughts occupied my mind as I eased forward the brass clasp, opened the box, and discovered therein a metallic object the size of a hazelnut. Not a brooch, for there was no pin attached to it. I eased the object from the silken folds in which it lay and examined it. This was a hearing aid. Someone had taken it to the races, possibly realised that the

course commentary was dispensable, removed it from ear to box, pushed the box into the pocket of a Barbour coat, missed (handicaps tend not to come singly) and walked off to a convenient vantage point for Division II of the Adjutant General's in which a 33-1 outsider led from start to finish. I moved to the winners' enclosure, scanning the crowd for someone egregiously deficient of a hearing aid. There was no obvious candidate.

I eschewed a mistake that many would have made: take it to the secretary's tent and hear the subsequent humiliating announcement, "Will the citizen who has lost a hearing aid in a purple box please come to the weighing room" — an announcement that would be heard by all but the one who had need of that information.

I opened up my race card to compose a more sympathetic, realistic pronouncement on the blank space of the inside back cover. It was on the lines of: Here is an important message. We have been handed a lost hearing aid. Please approach the person standing closest to you, raise your voice and ask him/her whether he/she has lost one. If you receive no response, mime — perhaps by pointing to your ear, cupping your hand around it and raising your eyebrows in enquiry. Do not be embarrassed about doing this; do not take offence if it is done to you. Co-operation by the racegoers who hear this will result in relief and happiness for someone who, bearing in mind the results to

date, has probably had a comprehensively rotten afternoon.

The announcer could end the message with a reminder about the Field Sports Society, which does such wonderful work to prevent mindless socialists from banning hunting, which we all know would result in the extermination of the fox; it is only the inefficiency of horses and hounds that enables their survival. Hunts are keen to stress this point.

The Open race was won by a 14-1 outsider ridden by a man who might have acquired his skills in the foothills of Wyoming in the last century; there was not a lot of cheering when he passed the winning post, though the owner of the state-of-the-art device in his box in my pocket would not have noticed.

A policeman and his female assistant were keeping an eye on the silverware that is presented to the race winners and I approached them, offering them my booty. "Found it in the grass. Haven't opened the box. Not my job, too much prying into other folk's belongings as it is," I said; "could be Mark Phillips's engagement ring. You'll know what to do."

The officer asked me for my name and address in case there was a reward.

I declined to disclose my identity, told him that finding the box and helping to restore it to its rightful owner was reward enough, also the most constructive thing I had done in the course of backing eight successive losers.

Strangers on a train

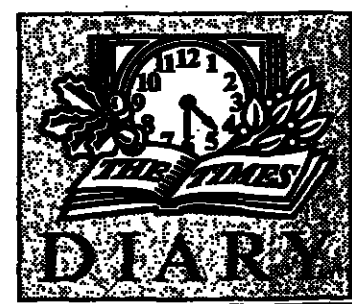
Carrying Labour's pugnacious transport spokesman John Prescott on the same train as the transport minister Roger Freeman was never going to be British Rail's easiest task. The state of railways has long been a particular cause of contention between them. Imagine, then, Prescott's dismay on arriving at Paddington for a trip to south Wales to find that not only was he sharing a train with the minister, but that Freeman was in the driver's cabin.

"I saw the station master standing in attention and the minister's party on the train, but no sign of Freeman," he says. "So I asked where he was. When they told me he was driving it I began to get really worried, given this government's record on safety. Then my coffee started spilling out of my cup as the train lurched about."

According to Freeman, Prescott spent the rest of the journey unsuccessfully attempting to join him in the driver's cab. But because there is no access directly from the carriage, Prescott was reduced to jumping on to the platform every time the train stopped. Prescott differs: "I wasn't trying to get in with him. I just took a seat close to the communication cord in case of emergency."

Says Freeman: "When we got to Neath, he jumped out, ran along the train and banged on the window of the cab. He seemed annoyed that he hadn't been able to sit up front. I reassured him that although I wasn't driving, the train had at least arrived on time."

But Labour's man had the last laugh. As Freeman was there on party political business, to campaign in the Neath by-election, official transport was not available and he had to drive off in an inelegant campaign bus. Prescott



was there to inspect the vehicle licensing centre in Swansea. He was whisked away in a chauffeur-driven limousine by officials from Freeman's own department.

Family service

Distribution of the Royal Maundy returns to Westminster Abbey today after a ten-year absence, during which the service was taken around the country to such places as Newcastle and Birmingham. This year's will be something of a family event. "It will be the first time three generations have been involved," says Peter Wright, the secretary of the Royal Almonry at Buckingham Palace, who is overseeing the event. Two years ago, the family had two generations represented, when Wright's granddaughter acted as one of the children of the Royal Almonry, symbolically representing the four old soldiers dressed in linen towed who participated in the original ceremony.

Today, in the interest of fairness, his second grand-daughter gets her turn. But to complete the family hat-trick, Wright's son, Paul Loddington Wright, director of music at Coventry cathedral, will be present to hear the Abbey's chorists sing his anthem, written to the words from the gospel of St John on which the service is based, "Love one another as I have loved you."

The hot seat

Magnus Magnusson, chairman of the Nature Conservancy Council for Scotland, is facing a resignation call even before he formally takes up the job. Staff at the NCC were startled to learn that Magnusson supports Icelandic whaling. Since that discovery farmers, conservationists and Scottish Labour MPs have criticised his appointment.

Recently Magnusson established a working party to consider a plan to turn the Cairngorms into a world heritage site. The choice of experts has enraged his critics



further, with conservationists, mountaineers and hill-climbers furious at what they claim is their poor representation on the body.

Dr Alan Watson, a countryside commissioner and accepted expert on the Cairngorms says: "Heads should roll. Magnus Magnusson should be one of those to resign." Watson's surprise at being excluded from the working party is understandable. When a contestant gave the Cairngorms as his specialist subject on Magnusson's BBC *Mastermind* quiz, the researchers turned to him to set the questions. Magnusson yesterday declined to reply to his critics. "He doesn't want to say anything," said a spokesman. Not even "pass?"

● The British tourist trade is slowly picking up after the Gulf war, but one hotelier in York is taking extra precautions to reassure those Americans who believe London is on the outskirts of Baghdad. John Gallery of the Swallow Hotel, which has lost 80 per cent of its American trade in recent months, has devised a "York loves New Yorkers" package, which includes a free phone call home on arrival to reassure concerned relatives, and a framed photograph of General Schwarzkopf in every bedroom.

Guarded secret

A self-effacing politician? Surely, an oxymoron. But how about Andrew Robathan, the would-be inheritor of Nigel Lawson's 22,000 majority in Blaby? Robathan has returned to Britain after 10 weeks in the Gulf with the Coldstream Guards, where virtually his last act was as escort to the Commons defence select committee, taking MPs around the 30 square miles of parked allied armoured vehicles at Al Jubail in Saudi Arabia. Robathan, who was guarding Iraqi tanks after the 4,000 PoWs under his command had been returned to Iraq, was complimented on his knowledge over dinner with the MPs. But he says: "I just could not own up to who I am. I thought it would sound a bit pompous to say that I hope to be joining you after the next election."

Robathan, who followed liberating allied troops into Kuwait and Iraq in an air-conditioned four-wheel-drive hire car, will be reunited with the Coldstream Guards at "the mother of all parties" to be held shortly at their London barracks. As for the MPs, he says: "They still don't know who I am. I shall own up the next time I see them." As he hopes that their next meeting will be on the green leather benches, introductions should be superfluous.

CRIME, I



BACK IN THE RACE

The International Olympic Committee announced yesterday that South Africa would be allowed to compete in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, provided that a unified sports organisation, offering better training and facilities for non-whites, could be created within six months. To have kept the sports boycott against the advice of black leaders in South Africa would have been perverse. By giving South Africans of all races a chance to compete together before the world, next year's Games might for once contribute to universal brotherhood.

George Orwell put it more cynically. "International sport is war without shooting." Not everybody believes that sport should be about something other than politics. Hitler, host to the 1936 Berlin Games, had nothing but contempt for sport "for its own sake". The same has gone for many Third World politicians, for Commonwealth sportsmen and, for that matter, for many Western leaders who boycotted the Moscow Olympics.

The international bureaucracy of sport has a limited political function. While condemning or even ostracising sports against the ethos of fair play, it must also reward sincere attempts to extricate sport from the wheels of ideology under which the athletic skills of young people have often been crushed. In South Africa's case, the first task has been carried out with crusading zeal; the second, until now, has been left undone.

Ever since the sports boycott of South Africa began in the early 1960s, racial integration has made progress, in some sports more than others. Football and cricket, which are popular with black, coloured and Asian South Africans, have (as might be expected) moved faster than rugby. When this progress was not rewarded with readmission to international sport, disappointment was followed by indifference. Having initially exercised a perceptible influence on white opinion in the direction of piecemeal reform, the continuation of an

undifferentiated boycott of South African sport ceased to serve a useful purpose after the mid-1980s. Indeed it became a taunt of the right wing against the liberals: "Why change if the boycott continues anyway?"

Inequalities in facilities available to the different races will no doubt persist even when the apartheid laws are no more than a memory, as social and economic difference between ethnic groups persist in most countries. Legal reforms can have only an indirect impact on a leisure activity in which individuals engage voluntarily. Sport is a looking-glass: a society sees most of its habits and tastes reflected there, but only rarely its good intentions.

This week's fearful violence in the Johannesburg area has been a sobering reminder that the swift collapse of apartheid does not mean an end of tribal tension, in South Africa any more than elsewhere on the continent. If anything, the lower profile adopted by the police has removed constraints on political passions. Young black men make up a large proportion of the population. Their surplus energies, which should find an outlet in sport, are easily harnessed by local warlords or perverted by the climate of violence: witness Winnie Mandela's "football club". Yet sport — a form of conflict which demands courage and physical prowess, but is less ruinous than gang warfare — remains a focus of hope for the townships.

Though the Olympic breakthrough should be decisive, it is not the end of the story. When President F. W. de Klerk visits Britain next month, John Major would be the ideal figure to present him with an invitation for a South African national side to tour this country in 1992. The two politicians, needless to say, are mere intermediaries: the invitation would be from the MCC to the South African cricketing authorities. But politics need no longer interrupt the sporting links between these two nations.

BORROWERS BEWARE

The boom in house prices during the 1980s was one of the main causes of today's recession. So goes the conventional wisdom. With prices rising at 23 per cent a year at the height of the boom, the owner of an ordinary London house could, notionally, make as much money by sitting at home watching his wallpaper appreciate as by going out to work. This created, in the words of Robin Leigh-Pemberton, governor of the Bank of England, on Tuesday, "a very false impression of wealth". People felt rich enough to borrow and spend, borrow and spend.

In order to curb this demand-led inflation, the government felt it had to raise interest rates. Base rates doubled in little over a year. Buyers vanished and prices fell. But industry was also hit hard. The pound appreciated, making exports harder to sell; domestic demand fell as higher interest rates bit into consumer spending; and the interest rates acted as a disincentive to investment. The effect was akin to cutting off a foot because it had blisters: the blisters ceased to hurt, but the stump was a lot more painful.

Now, during the downturn in the housing cycle, is the time to work out how to prevent such a damaging boom happening again. Mr Leigh-Pemberton's remarks to the Commons Treasury and civil service committee this week should open the debate. He said he was "attracted by the idea of some sort of restriction on the limits of lending on individual mortgages": either a minimum level of deposit, with an exemption for first-time buyers, or stopping homeowners from borrowing more than they need when they move house. It was this "equity withdrawal" of the 1980s — people borrowing against the security of an overvalued property in order to buy consumer goods — that was the most potent fuel to the boom.

CRIME, FORSOOTH

Despite this morning's headlines, the English are among the least likely citizens of any Western country to fall victim to violent crime, the type of crime people most fear. A digest of statistics from the Home Office research department, published yesterday, lists such countries as Australia, the United States, Norway, France, Germany, Spain, Canada, even "peaceful" Switzerland, as more dangerous in this respect. The same research shows the English particularly prone to commit (or suffer from) thefts or from cars, compared with other countries. More trusting, perhaps. Or more careless. Or just better insured and thus more inclined to report theft to the police.

These figures are of actual crimes, based on asking the general public what happened to it over the course of a year. Reported crime statistics, a quarterly batch of which were also published yesterday, related to a completely different phenomenon, the state of the crime book in the local police station. They purport to show a large increase in crimes in the last quarter compared with last year — most of the increase being in reported car crime. But they do not prove that more car crime was committed in that quarter.

Nor is it "encouraging", as Home Office minister John Patten claimed, that (relatively rare) sexual offences have "fallen" in the same period, for neither the police nor Mr Patten have the foggiest notion whether they have or not. Sex-crime figures are a function of local police practice: how hard they pursue homosexuals, say, or whether they make the reporting of rape easier.

There are numerous reasons why more or fewer crimes might be reported, apart from the possibility that more or fewer crimes are being committed. The Home Office, which professes to dislike this quarterly dose of

Borrowers were aided in this by the exertions of lenders. When banks entered the mortgage market wholeheartedly in the early 1980s, competition grew fierce. Mortgage queues vanished. Banks and building societies competed to offer potential borrowers ever higher multiples of their salaries. With house prices rising fast, those without properties were reluctant to rent for fear of missing out on the bonanza. They took out mortgages which they could afford with base rates in single figures, but which crippled them once rates climbed. The detritus of the boom lies around them now in repossessed houses and bad debts.

For the next few years, both borrowers and lenders will remember the lessons of the 1980s. But that memory will not last forever. In the next boom, building society and bank managers will be under the same pressure to lend more than their rivals. Young homebuyers will be convinced that they will always be able to sell their houses if they get into financial trouble. Higher interest rates would then prove the same woefully blunt instrument of deterrence.

Mandatory credit controls were tried and jettisoned in the 1970s. After 1992, they would be hard to enforce. But the Bank of England and the Building Societies Commission can still flex admonitory muscles. They have a justified interest in mortgage lending, because unwise lending can threaten the financial health of the institutions they regulate. If lenders could be persuaded to cease offering mortgages of four times annual salary, house prices would rise more slowly in response. As Mr Leigh-Pemberton said to the committee, persuasion is preferable to regulation. And it may even work.

scare-mongering but seems hooked on the publicity, turned it to some purpose yesterday by using the car-crime figures to urge people to be more careful. But by raising awareness of car crime, the tactic could as well produce another rise in the "reported" figures in the next quarter.

Such statistical deductions have the same validity as the claim, based on a recent survey, that most football supporters find the grounds they attend "comfortable". But not finding the ground comfortable would be one of the main reasons for not attending a football match, and therefore for being excluded from the survey. There is as much point in asking people in a pub whether they liked pubs. Statistics are only safe in the hands of statisticians, who must witness the abuse of the tools of their profession all around them.

Notes and News, distributed to the 5,000 members of the Royal Statistical Society, offers a monthly round-up of howlers, mostly gleaned from the press. They began with one two years ago, an item headed "Forsyth Forsyth", which reported a miscellany of figures by the writer Frederick Forsyth. Amusing or just plain ignorant examples of the same sort poured in uninvited from the society's members, and the regular column is now called "Forsyth" in memory of its unwitting founder.

The best of them, relevant to the discrediting of police crime figures, was an appeal broadcast one morning on Radio 4. "There is to be a traffic census at..." The announcer named the road. "This will cause delays, and drivers are advised to avoid the census point." Clearly, Notes and News could devote a whole Forsyth column to "quarterly crime statistics".

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. Telephone 071-782 5000

Pots, kettles and the Lawson challenge

From Sir Alfred Sherman

Sir, In stating that Nigel Lawson resigned over "a personal matter, his relations with Sir Alan Walters" (leading article, March 27) you perpetuate a myth. Lawson resigned because his policies were in ruins: he had brought back inflationary recession as severe as that inherited by the Conservatives in 1979 and lost the confidence of his prime minister and most other people.

The witch-hunt against Sir Alan Walters was a smoke-screen to divert attention from his own failures and elicit sympathy and approval from quarters which would never have accorded it while he was in office.

In Mr Lawson's latest exercise in innuendo, "dithering" (like the pejorative "ideology") seems to be a synonym for thinking before acting. The community charge, whether its political demerits were inherent or contrived, was not an exodus from Eden but a desperate expedient to halt the drop of local government expenditure, which now consumes a seventh of the national income, giving relatively little in return.

The problems which the community charge was designed to resolve still remain. In 1979 I warned the prime minister that any attempt to reform local government finance at the revenue end only was bound to fail calamitously and that reform could succeed only if undertaken simultaneously at both ends, revenue and expenditure, which includes structure and functions.

The government appears to be attempting this. Its efforts will have to be judged on their overall merits, rather than their speed.

Yours etc.

ALFRED SHERMAN,
10 Gerald Road, SW1.
March 27.

From Mr David M. Evans

Sir, Mr Lawson criticises the government for appearing unable to choose a successor to the community charge. We now know that as long ago as 1985 Mr Lawson

concluded that the community charge was "completely unworkable and politically catastrophic". Despite his fundamental opposition to this "flagship" policy he chose to remain in the cabinet for another four years.

I doubt whether Mr Lawson is now in the best position to advise his former colleagues on the art of government.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID M. EVANS,
47 Ursula Street, Battersea, SW11.
March 26.

From Mr David Gale

Sir, As Mr Lawson bears direct personal responsibility for the economic crisis that afflicts this nation, surely it might have been reasonable to expect that a long (or even permanent) period of silence might be forthcoming after his departure.

"To govern is to choose", he said yesterday; the unfortunate electorate might add, "and to govern badly is to choose wrongly, Mr Lawson". This ex-chancellor has no credibility; his pronouncements should neither concern us nor justify the front pages.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID GALE,
Horseshoe Road, N14.
March 26.

From Mr Jeff Dove

Sir, Any fool can make an instant decision. Mr Major should take no notice, take his time, take advice, but for all our sakes get it right.

Yours, with fingers crossed,
J. DOVE (Managing Director),
Mine Design Ltd.,
9 Windrush Close,
Allestree, Derby.

From Miss M. E. D. Biggs

Sir, A really welcome tax would have been one on inter-party political abuse.

Yours truly,
MERLE BIGGS,
Farnaby's, Elgin Road,
Weybridge, Surrey.
March 25.

Spoils of war

From Sir Philip Goodhart, MP for Beckenham (Conservative)

Sir, Over the years Denis Healey has often misinterpreted events in the Gulf, and he is quite wrong when he asserts (Daily, March 14) that Iraqi tanks and guns brought back for display in this country "would definitely be counted" under the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty.

Article III Section 1(C) of the treaty specifically excludes military equipment which "belongs to historical collections". Most of the front-line soldiers in the Gulf came from the Royal Artillery, the Royal Engineers, and the Royal Armoured Corps.

All these regiments and corps have outstanding military museums which could be strengthened still further by the provision of captured Iraqi guns and tanks of Soviet origin. I know that the Tank Museum at Bovington is hoping to

put some of the captured Iraqi armoured fighting vehicles on display this summer.

The RAF did not, of course, capture any Iraqi equipment, but I note that the German government has taken over a number of MiG 29s from the old East German air force. Under the CFE treaty the German government will have to get rid of these aircraft, and I understand that the Germans are thinking of transferring these aircraft to their new Czech allies.

As MiG 29s were the best aircraft in the Iraqi air force, it might be appropriate if the Germans gave the Imperial War Museum and the RAF Museum one each of their new surplus MiG 29s. With foresight and good management the implementation of the CFE treaty should provide a substantial quantity of British and allied equipment for our service museums.

Yours faithfully,
PHILIP GOODHART,
House of Commons.

Saving our ships

From Mr Richard I. Lund

Sir, It was interesting to read Mr Sir Charles Rippey's (March 22) to Lord Sterling letter on shipping taxation (March 13).

As shipbrokers it is seldom we find ourselves agreeing with the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers; but few would disagree that something must be done to revitalise our merchant fleet. Of course the General Council of British Shipping reforms would help, but I believe the main failure lies in the serious lack of will and purpose among the few remaining British shipowners that has been evident over many years.

How many extra vessels do GCB members intend to purchase if they get their desired taxation reforms? Very few, I hazard.

The British shipping industry needs to be as imaginative as its competitors around the globe in establishing modern flexible vessels to encourage the investment community to invest in its future. Yours faithfully,
RICHARD LUND (Chairman),
Howe Robinson & Co. Ltd
(Shipbrokers),
77 Mansell Street, E1.
March 25.

From Commander J. D. E. Lewis

Sir, Sam McCuskie's reply to Lord Sterling ignores the fact that the presently deplorable position of British shipping, and of our seamen, was forecast in the 1950s and 1960s when the industry, battling for a Britain crippled by the war, was shamefully held to ransom in a series of catastrophic strikes by the combined efforts of the dockers and the seamen.

In the early 1950s some 300 Tidy House pilots in the Port of London, then proudly known as the busiest in the world, were urged to become affiliated to the Transport and General Workers Union. This, it was said, was in order to "sew up" the great port completely. The pilots, of which the writer was one, refused.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN D. E. LEWIS,
24 Elyon Close,
Berkhamshead, Hertfordshire.
March 22.

Letters to the editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — (071 782 5046).

'Budget for business' under scrutiny

From Dr K. A. Harrap

Sir, Those of us who have worked in both the public and private sectors have long been aware of the paucity of business experience, let alone expertise, in the Treasury. Now that we have Mr Lamont's "Budget for business" it is plain for all to see.

For this small company of three members last week's government action has increased the cost of its two mobile phones, around which a good deal of the client business depends; has increased in several ways the cost of the one company car which acts as a mobile office throughout southern England; has increased the cost of a personal mortgage, a large proportion of which was originally required to set up the business; and has increased the problems of cash flow administration by handling yet more money on behalf of Customs and Excise.

When will the actions of ministers and their civil servants endorse the view that it is business that provides the engine of wealth for this country? It is only business that can deliver the benefits in care and public service that we all want. Small business is a vital part of this.

The small entrepreneur will now realise that the government's values have moved since Mrs Thatcher left.

Yours faithfully,
KEITH A. HARRAP
(Managing Director),
Science Connections Limited,
The Gaunt, 16 High Street,
Malmesbury, Wiltshire.
March 25.

From Professor John Moxham

Sir, As expected, the Tobacco Advisory Council objects (report, March 20) to the welcome rise in the cost of cigarettes. It contends that the price rise will not deter people from smoking. This is nonsense. Whenever the cost of smoking is increased there is a fall in consumption and, associated with that fall, a reduction in death and disability from smoking-related diseases.

The Tobacco Advisory Council's second main theme was the loss of jobs in the tobacco industry. In Nottingham, a city noted for cigarette manufacture, overall deaths from smoking each year amount to 50 per cent of the work-force employed by the tobacco companies.

Presumably even the Tobacco Advisory Council can appreciate the flaw in the logic of preferring employment to life. Yours faithfully,
JOHN MOXHAM (Chairman,
Tobacco Committee),
British Thoracic Society,
1 St Andrew's Place, NW1.
March 25.

From the Director of the Biscuit, Cake, Chocolate and Confectionery Alliance

Sir, Contrary to the government's frequent assertions, not all food products are zero-rated. Chocolate, sugar confectionery and chocolate-coated biscuits bear the standard rate of VAT. These products are food and are eaten by most of the population. The Chancellor's 16.6

per cent increase in the rate of VAT will further distort consumer choice between competing products and damage the working of the free market.

Increasing discrimination against one of Britain's most successful industries in this way will simply mean that companies will think twice before making decisions on whether future investment in manufacturing capacity should be in the UK or in other EC countries, where the natural advantages of the continental land mass are complemented by a more fair-minded approach to indirect taxation.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN NEWMAN, Director,
The Biscuit, Cake, Chocolate and Confectionery Alliance,
11 Green Street, W1.
March 22.

From the Chairman of the British Fruit Juice Importers Association

Sir, Richard Adams (March 25) is quite right to point out some of the anomalies in food items which are not subject to VAT. He might also have included fruit juices, which are not only liable to VAT but in most cases also pay a hefty import duty — up to 19 per cent in the case of orange juice and even higher for some others.

Yours faithfully,
CLIVE WEBSTER, Chairman,
The British Fruit Juice Importers Association,
Shoelands, Seale,
Farnham, Surrey.
March 25.

From Mr A. James French

Sir, Today's leader ("Yes, Chancellor", March 26) refers to the "logic of the car-phone tax" and the invasion of people's private space.

Greater credence might be given to this view if the logic was extended to the "joys" of the Walkman and ghetto-blasters. I have never heard the suggestion of taxation raised in this area.

You do not have to be a cynic to reason why.

Yours sincerely,
A. JAMES FRENCH,
40 Docking Road,
Ringstead, Norfolk.
March 26.

From the Director of the Community Council for Somerset

Sir, The rural community councils (independent charities concerned with promoting self-help in rural areas) are among the few all-round losers after last week's government announcements. Because we are charities, and therefore pay the additional VAT on purchases without the chance of refund or ability to increase charges, we will receive no benefit from the poll-tax reduction.

We are partly funded by local government, and should the share county or districts be abolished we would be in danger of losing part of our core funding.

Yours sincerely,
P. W. LACEY, Director,
Community Council for Somerset,
St Margaret's, Hamilton Road,
Taunton, Somerset.
March 25.

Air routes dispute

From Mr A. J. Lucking

Sir, Sir Colin Marshall (March 22) complains on behalf of British Airways about the reallocation of "slots" at Tokyo airport. He is facing similar sacrifices at Heathrow. Both the options selected for detailed study involve slot transfers from the incumbent airlines, to enable new competitors to gain a foothold, and one scheme does not envisage financial compensation.

The collapse of yet another operator at Gatwick, and the eagerness of others to escape from what has become a scheduled airline graveyard, has shown that remote airports do not serve the central London market satisfactorily. The level of acceptable fares at Gatwick has proved to be between 7.5 per cent and 20 per cent below those secured at Heathrow, in an industry where the average margin on sales is 5 per cent.

We should accept that there is and will remain only one scheduled service airport that serves central London properly, and that Heathrow must be expanded to fulfil market needs by adding a short domestic runway as soon as possible. A recent visit to the Orange County airport in California showed me how nearby residents were satisfied that the new quieter aircraft can be operated in ways which almost eliminate the noise nuisance.

With regard to compensation for BA losing its slots at Narita, re-reading the prospectus reminds one that the airline has gained tens of millions of pounds from sub-economic rents at Heathrow. Some of this advantage still persists.

Yours faithfully,
A. J. LUCKING,
20/17 Broad Court, WC2.

Friendly persuasion

From Mr Paul A. Samet

Sir, The chairman of British Telecom was reported by you on March 21 as saying that the company would be issuing "customer-friendly uniforms to its staff". Quite apart from leaving one wondering just what such a uniform might entail, would it not be better to spend the money on having customer-friendly staff?

Yours faithfully,
PAUL A. SAMET,
3 Tooke Close,
Hatch End, Middlesex.

Michael Wright on a tragic Cambridge tale of the obsessive love of a middle-aged don for a young girl

Old passion along those Backs

If, in another existence, this novel were to materialise in edible form, it would be a cucumber sandwich. Bland, substantial and old-fashioned, but with a hint of crisp, delicate freshness at its heart. *Air and Angels* falls squarely into the category of teatime books that beg sunshine and a glass of white wine.

Perhaps a more likely alternative existence, however, would be on celluloid; the novel oozes cinematic aspirations. A series of overlapping narratives is shuffled into short scenes, with endless cinematic leaps from elegant location to elegant location. Most of these have Mer-

weight to the novel's loose dialectic of restriction versus freedom, but the predatory intimations are heavy-handed and the overall effect blurred. Stylistically, the novel lacks buoyancy, and at times the writing seems almost slapdash. Sentences tend to be long and ragged, with clauses bundled together like alternatives in a grammatical multiple choice. "And his heart leaped at the sight, and the moth-like beauty of it, and where he had been out of true with his surroundings, his mood fractious, now something within him adjusted, and he relaxed and was at peace, and at one with the world, and his own presence within it."

The repetition of the word "and" is persistent; such "polysyndeton" can be effective in small doses, but Hill hammers out her favourite conjunction unrelentingly, as if to borrow a false fluency and soften the edges with faux King James elegance.

Nevertheless (and this is where the crisp, delicate freshness comes in), the sun briefly emerges from behind the linguistic clouds during Cavendish's honeymoon period, when for three perfect days, he experiences what he believes to be a forerunner of paradise, gambolling about the countryside with Kitty. This has a serenity and beauty that stands out; Hill may have had to compromise elsewhere in order to make so tricky a scene ring true, and to divorce it entirely from any sexual connotation, but she has succeeded bravely, and here at least, her touch is impressive. Nice-cucumber; shame about all the bread and butter.

AIR AND ANGELS
By Susan Hill
Sinclair-Stevenson, £13.95



Susan Hill, star of the Sixties, returns to the trials and delights of love with her first novel for 17 years

An otherness of Injun fables

IF I were an Apache or an Iroquois, a Sioux or a Pawnee, I'm not sure that I would care to be caged up behind the almost zoological euphemism "Native American". The old phrase "Red Indian" may be both inaccurate and laden with pejorative implications, but at least it retains something of the mysterious otherness of the tribes that was so overwhelmed by palefaces with their guns, their liquor and their influenza.

A sense of this otherness is essential to the retelling of American Indian stories and it is the most potent ingredient in *Crow and Weasel*. The story — such as it is — concerns the journey north of two plains Indians, over the River of Floating Ashes, through unknown forests, and across uninhabited tundra, and jolly nearly by the shore of Gitche Gumee, by the shining Big-Sea-Water, of another age and

CHILDREN

Brian Alderson

CROW AND WEASEL
By Barry Lopez
Illustrated by Tom Pohrt
Century, £9.99

another poet, until they meet people from the tribe of the flat-faced Inuit. Here they exchange gifts and stories before riding back through the hardships of the encroaching winter to their own tribe.

The substance of the book owes more to modern notions of what the blurb calls "cultural values" and our "spiritual relationship to the landscape" than it does to any known traditional narrative. This gives the story an uncertain and disconcerting idiom. At times there are

intrusive 20th-century descriptions or psychological explanations, at times a pseudo-naïveté. (Occasionally the dialogue between Crow and Weasel sounds like that in Arnold Lobel's *Frog and Toad Are Friends*.)

Despite such waywardness, however, Barry Lopez does manage to sustain a sense of the spaces and the changing air of this unpeopled terrain wide open to the far horizon, and, at its best, his account of Crow and Weasel's friendship and their meeting with other wayfarers — Mouse and Badger and Grizzly Bear — carries the reader back to that place in that mythical time. This celebration of the alien is much enhanced by Tom Pohrt's atmospheric paintings, in which everyone except the flat-faced Inuit is portrayed as an animal, albeit an animal wearing authentic local costume.

Our thin blue line goes to Oz

HISTORICALS

Philippa Toomey

THE NUTMEG OF CONSOLATION
By Patrick O'Brian
Collins, £13.99

SHIPWRECKED on a small island in the Dutch East Indies, with food (and worse still, tobacco and grog) running short, the officers and men of the late HMS Diane are enjoying a game of cricket on a Sunday afternoon. It is a promising beginning to another adventure of Jack Aubrey and his close friend Dr Stephen Maturin. Set in the early 19th century navy, these stories are appreciated by a wider readership than lovers of historical novels. The two men seem to have little in common, apart from their love of music. Jack Aubrey is a commander of men, a brilliant naval officer, who is hopelessly at sea when on land. Stephen Maturin, physician, of Catalan and Irish descent, a natural philosopher with a passion for the flora and fauna of the world, is also a spy, and a first class swordsman and marksman. While the crew are playing cricket, he is shooting for the pot with what little powder they have left.

The ship's company is also building a boat in which to escape their fate — but this is burnt by a company of marauding Dyaks. Fortunately they are rescued by a Chinese trader, and taken to Batavia, where, with the help of Stamford Raffles, they find themselves a new ship, and set off, this time to Australia.

Each novel (this is the 14th) can be read on its own — and *The Nutmeg of Consolation* (the name of the new ship) differs slightly in that there is only one sea battle with the French — a chivalrous and friendly enemy. There is more of character and everyday life in the navy, where we meet, among others, Jack Aubrey's difficult but efficient servant, Killick, and the frightening old man, Awkward Davis, who follows Jack around from ship to ship, getting madder and madder, but always present as a boarding party, carrying an axe, and foaming at the mouth.

There is a fortunate meeting with the happy and lucky ship HMS Surprise (heroine of many of the other novels), but good fortune runs out with the arrival in Sydney. Stephen and Jack have been to Australia before, in the days of Governor Bligh, and the place

has not improved. Men in chains, brutally maltreated, are visible everywhere. The author's knowledge of the period is encyclopaedic, but it melts unobtrusively into the narrative. The backdrop of all is the life and the discipline of the navy, as Jack Aubrey sees it, instant obedience, high discipline, punctuality, cleanliness — from which can be formed an efficient and happy ship's company. Huzzay, as they used to say in the navy, for Patrick O'Brian.

● *Never Were Such Times*, by Nancy Livingstone (Macdonald, £12.95). Unassuming, pleasantly written family saga of the very poor. Disappointed in her marriage in 1850 to the village ne'er-do-well, Sybilla finds herself saddled with Chas, Albert and Polly, children of her dead brother. Disappointment makes her a miser and scold. In London Kezia Morgan brings up her illegitimate daughter, and the book encompasses the destinies of both families, not to fame and fortune, but to acceptance and contentment.

● *Olivia and Jai*, by Rebecca Ryman (Helmman, £14.99). At 19, Olivia O'Rourke from California is staying with her titled aunt in the Calcutta of 1848. She meets the mad, bad and dangerous to know Jai Ravensthorpe, handsome, black-haired, grey-eyed, and half Indian. Not so much a melodrama as a farago, as improbable event follows anachronistic dialogue concerning viable projects and chickens out, while well-brought-up women revile each other in 20th-century bed language. A total lack of period sense added to poor English ("she jubilated") makes a grim 727 pages, though the Indian background is good.

Fable of paper mountain

Andrew Sinclair

TOO LOUD A SOLITUDE

By Bohumil Hrabal
Tr. by Michael Heim
André Deutsch, £9.99

PESTILENCE

By William Owen Roberts
Hamish Hamilton, £13.99

THE LOVES AND JOURNEYS OF REVOLVING JONES

By George Macbeth
Bloomsbury, £13.99



By Leslie Thomas

Methuen, £14.99

ANOTHER LOVE STORY

By George Macbeth

Bloomsbury, £13.99

WITHIN Too Loud a Solitude is a parable of technology. An old man, Hrabal's, has run for 35 years a hydraulic press, which compacts books into a paper bale. It treats all literature equally — trash, magazines, Nazi propaganda, reproductions of Rembrandt, Kant and Lao-tzu. But he treats literature unequally in his form of criticism. He rescues the fine books and those with good bindings. He sees society and the human mind as a cube of books, squashed together. He sleeps under a canopy of two tons of old volumes, and he even loves the mice which squeak among his treasures.

Two gypsy girls, carrying a hundred-weight of paper scrap, visit and tempt him and remind him of his youthful Romany love, taken away to a concentration camp. And finally, he encounters the new book-crusher, as large as a cathedral altar, tended by young men in white overalls who drink milk and plan athletic and unlettered holidays in Greece, where he has never been, for all his classical visions. They will replace him, they will remove no great work from the pulp of the press. And so Hrabal's prepares his logical and heavy end, his finger on a line of Novalis: "Every beloved object is the centre of the garden of paradise."

Lyric and wry, this perfect short novel shows Hrabal to be the best writer of moral fables in Europe. Translated from the Welsh, Pestilence is an uncanny recreation of the Middle Ages. Such sharpness in the quill of so young a writer as William Owen Roberts should keep Umberto Eco watching his back and his semiology. Inter-cut in short scenes between a Welsh village and a Muslim's pilgrimage to kill the King of France, the novel is lusty and playful, sly and jaunty. It reveals in the extremes of human behaviour caused by the threat of the Black Death. Excess is everyday, only the usual is out of tune.

Yet there is a kind of sympathy for the bestial lives of the peasants and a keen understanding of the faith and purity of the Arab pilgrim. Crudity and fervour jostle each other sentence for sentence. Boccaccio is encountered on the road in Italy — one of his stories, putting the devil in hell, is played out by a Celtic seafarer on his ten-year-old freeborn love. The borrowings in the text are tributes to the works of the medieval poets and picaresque writers. This book is an apt pupil to its roistering masters. Never discount Leslie Thomas just because he wrote *The Virgin Soldiers*. Every professional author has to survive drowning from praise of his first book, and he comes up here for the 25th time. *The Loves and Journeys of Revolving Jones* is a rollicking tale of a Welsh sailor with a girl in every port, but only one true love at home, however much a traveller himself.

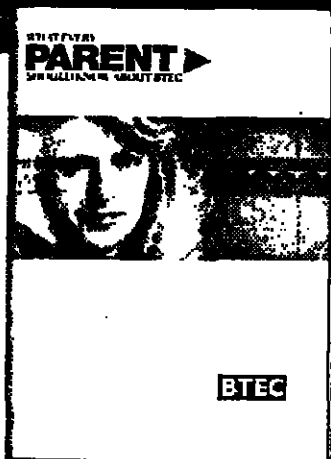
An orphan son of a sailor, Thomas has a rare gift for words, which he never lost in his early career of consigning his phrases to the airwaves. This is his best book and a celebration of his robust talents, which combine flesh with imagination. He always had a narrative verve, and this saga develops it into a turn of the wheel of life. Revolving Jones comes back at last to his eternal miss, and hopefully, Leslie Thomas will achieve a revolution in his reputation.

FOR ONCE, the epigraph is the message. The lines are, usual, from W. H. Auden. "And I, submissive, felt Unwanted and went out." Auden also used to say, if he thought of two perfect lines to open or conclude a poem, he eliminated them, or there was no point in writing the poem at all. Another Love Story by the poet and writer, George Macbeth, illustrates Auden's verse and remark instead of the reverse. It is a spare and embarrassing description of a marriage going wrong, the reason and unreason why a wife leaves her husband.

The confessional element in it by one of our superior writers does not translate into a novel. For once George Macbeth, an alchemist in his usual persuasions, is too near the truth of the matter. He cannot describe the change of things into the philosopher's stone. For all of Macbeth's ranging imagination, it is dross. It sticks in the crucible, even though there is chat of teddy-bears. Yes, alas, it is just another love story, but that is too banal for the emotion of George Macbeth, who was evidently unwanted and came out with this.

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THEATRE

Why has Sussex lost a leader?

IS THE reason for Michael Rudman's sudden departure from the Chichester Festival Theatre the board's fear that his imminent second season as director, like his first, might make a loss? In the absence of comment from either party, that seems the obvious explanation.

Rudman's 1990 season was a modest critical success, but only Neil Simon's farce *Rumours* played to full houses. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, with Penelope Keith, won audiences of 75 per cent; the other three productions fell below the break-even point of 70 per cent. An impending West End transfer of *Dora Bryan* in the musical *70 Girls* 70, may improve the financial picture.

Chichester has not made a loss for several years, and has no subsidy to offset any drop in income. That, combined with the traditionalism of Sussex audiences, helps explain why such past directors as



Michael Rudman: gone

John Clements and John Gale opted for safe programmes. Those who showed signs of resisting that ethos, like Robin Phillips, disappeared rapidly.

Yet last season was not noticeably bold, and the new one is still scheduled to open on April 29 with *Arsenic and Old Lace* - hardly avant-garde stuff. A more worrying event, from the board's stance, may be a planned production of *Till Tomorrow*, by the American singer Don Maclean.

Patrick Garland has returned to the theatre he left after solid seasons in charge between 1981 and 1984. He must decide quickly how much of Rudman's programme to replace. The Chichester board must explain why it has suddenly lost a director of Rudman's calibre. He made Hampstead a centre of excellence, illuminated the National Theatre as a senior director, discovered Michael Frayn, and staged revivals of *Death of a Salesman* that Arthur Miller thought uncommonly good. Was he not good enough for Chichester, or too good?

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

CINEMA: NEW RELEASES

Go-between as an in-between

Geoff Brown on Bruce Beresford's *Mister Johnson*, plus *The Golden Braid*, *Desperate Hours* and *King Ralph*

For a long while Bruce Beresford's directorial career followed the trajectory of a yo-yo: *The Adventures of Barry McKenzie* one minute, cultured literary adaptations the next, with the odd Hollywood misfire scattered in between (*King David*). But now he seems on a steeper course. Two years ago, *Driving Miss Daisy* glided smoothly onto the screen, scooping four Oscars including Best Picture. Now comes *Mister Johnson* (12, Curzon Phoenix), adapted by William Boyd from Joyce Cary's novel about cultural displacement in colonial Nigeria during the Twenties: a film equally stamped with fine performances and a scrupulous eye for atmosphere.

Cary's novel describes the tragicomic exploits of a tribal African, educated by missionaries and employed as clerk to a well-meaning district officer deep in Nigeria's bushlands. In speech, dress and manners he attempts to ape his colonial masters. He joins in officers' chit-chat about an England he sees only in his dreams; whatever the weather, he struts about in white suit, waistcoat, black shoes, pith helmet and rolled umbrella.

Through native wit and what would now be called creative accounting, Johnson engineers funds for his master's pet project - a road linking the region to a little more of the outside world. But his success is short-lived: family money matters dog his heels, leading to an accidental killing. Cary's hero is trapped between two cultures, and neither side can rescue him.

Film newcomer Maynard Eziashi, a 22-year-old Londoner with Nigerian parents, brings the character to ebullient life, lighting up the screen with his infectious beam and dancing eyes; in February he deservedly won the Best Actor award at the Berlin Film Festival. The colonial types, mounted to a man, rest in the well-practised hands of Denis Quilley and Edward Woodward, while Pierce Brosnan (as the gentlemanly district officer, Rudbeck) finally proves he can offer more than a pin-up's good looks.

Maybe Beresford is overzealous about the film's artistic

magic that hangs in the mind long after the credits fade. *Golden Braid*, from a De Mausepant story, may not match *Cactus or Man of Flowers*, but is a delicious cinema.

De Mausepant's story, *La Chevre*, spins the compact tale of a madman who becomes obsessed with a lock of hair. Cox transposes the wisp of narrative to his own special universe of exclusive types, adrift on the bizarre sea of Australian society. His hero is Bernard, a clock restorer, played with understated aplomb by the excellent Chris Haywood (interviewed by David Robinson, below).

Entranced by the mystery of a woman's hair hidden away in an 18th-century cabinet, Bernard strokes his discovery, talks to it, places it on the adjacent seat at a concert, and even takes the thing to bed. Bernard's girlfriend, understandably, takes this amiss, and fights to regain his affections; here, Gosia Dobrowolska's spirited performance adds a touch of erotic fire to the sombre mood.

The story is played against an extraordinary symphony of ticking, chiming, whirring and clicking clock mechanisms. Cox indulges the mad effects a little too heavily for comfort after a while one wishes this restorer would get to work and embow a silent digital watch. But he remains supreme among Australian filmmakers: he displays a fiercely poetic imagination, and takes willing spectators to strange, magical places.

Michael Cimino's *Desperate Hours* (15, Prince Charles), by contrast, drags the spectator into an ugly cinematic wasteland. Film buffs will recall Joseph Hayes's source material about



Maynard Eziashi, in the title role of *Mister Johnson*, brings the character of the colonial clerk to ebullient life

a suburban family terrorised by three criminals during the Fifties, as *The Desperate Hours*, it made a successful novel, a popular play, and a decent film, directed by William Wyler, with Humphrey Bogart as the chief assailant and Fredric March as the family patriarch who finally gains the upper hand.

But Cimino's hideous version loses far more than the title's definite article. The claustrophobic ambience of a house under siege is abandoned in grandiose mountain scenery and action thrills with cars and planes. Wyler's hard-edged visual style is replaced by garish photography of extreme whimsicality.

Acting follows the same

trend. Mickey Rourke fritters away Bogart's old part in a tiring display of sulks and sleazy grins. Anthony Hopkins huffs and puffs as the patriarch held hostage, but never brings his character into focus.

Lindsay Crouse is particularly hard done by: nobody would know from her performance that behind the crazed shrieks ("My earrings are hurting! I'm in a really bad mood!") lies a decent actress.

To be fair, Cimino's bulldozing style is not entirely to blame. No matter how many mod cons the script dishes up (Walkmen, video games and car pools), Hayes's plot re-

mains a museum piece of Fifties paranoia about the American dream under threat. For whatever reason, *Desperate Hours* is desperate indeed: a film overwrought to the point of parody.

King Ralph (PG, on release), made at Pinewood Studios, pushes the roly-poly John Goodman from his usual position of supporting film actor to the star's place above the title. Unfortunately the director, David S. Ward, gives him little to do except waddle through a comedy too flimsy to survive at the box-office for long. The premise at least is fetching: after a frantic search through family trees, a Las Vegas piano player ascends the British throne following an

electrical accident that wiped out the entire royal family.

As an American view of British life, the film is at least more realistic than *Three Men and a Cradle*; the camera takes in suburban allotments, punks, fast food and litter. But to British eyes there is little fresh humour in the juxtaposition of an exuberant American slob and the protocol and pageantry of Buckingham Palace. Goodman's chief sparring partner is Peter O'Toole; as His Majesty's private secretary he raises an exquisite eyebrow at the monarch's gaucheries, but like all involved, his gifts for comedy are largely wasted in a good-natured frolic that gradually becomes a bore.

CINEMA: INTERVIEW

Fated to leave Billericay for the bush

Australian actor Chris Haywood talks to David Robinson

Chris Haywood is as Australian as a well-chilled lager. His bronzed, rugged and rarely smiling face has shown up in almost every worthwhile film from *Down Under* since the Australian cinema's renaissance, including *Newsfront* and *Breaker Morant*. He plays the lead in Paul Cox's *Golden Braid* (reviewed by Geoff Brown, above). And since January, BBC 1 viewers have been seeing him weekly, as Tim Healy's partner in *The Boys From the Bush*.

The surprise is that Haywood was born in Billericay, and had his first brush with the stage in Stratford East. "At 17 I enrolled in the E19 theatre school started by actors from the Theatre Royal for the kids of the area."

He left for Australia in 1970. "My first job was as a surveyor's assistant on the railways. Then I was simultaneously offered two jobs: understudying two different plays. I took them both, and gave both theatres the telephone number of a pub where I used to drink. Luckily I never got called by both theatres the same night."

"After that I worked with various little theatres. It was a period of resurgence in Australian writing, with a whole school of new realist writers. My first film was *The Cars That Ate Paris*. Since 1982 it has mostly been film."

Haywood is a passionate fighter for an indigenous cinema. "It is essential that each country maintains its own film culture if the world is to understand its people. Australia has lost directors like Peter Weir, Bruce Beresford, Philip Noyce and Fred Schepisi to Hollywood because the promotion of our films has not kept pace with their creative ability."



Co-stars for Paul Cox: Chris Haywood and Gosia Dobrowolska in *The Golden Braid*

RECORDS: JAZZ

Demanding and maddening, too

George Russell's Living Time Orchestra: The London Concert (Label Bleu LBLC 8527/8) Rahsaan Roland Kirk: The Man Who Could Not Stop Talking (Night Records VNCD1)

THE sultry night in 1989 when George Russell brought his Living Time Orchestra to Ronnie Scott's was not for the faint-hearted. As the jazz world's principal intellectual-in-residence, the American composer makes severe demands on his audience. At Scott's, many had wilted by the end of the first set.

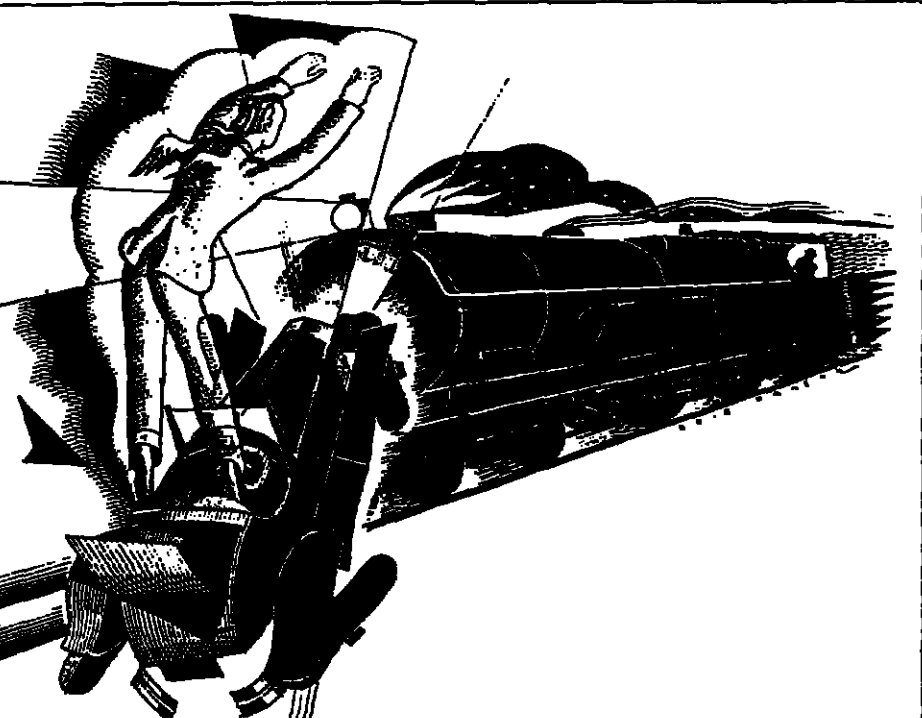
Like most of Russell's recent albums, *The London Concert* creates a wild mosaic of colour. Some ideas work exceptionally well, some teeter on the verge of incoherence, while yet others offer further proof that jazz musicians are not very good at playing rock. (G) Evans went down a similar high-volume path towards the end of his life - to the distress of those who grew up on *Out of the Cool* - but Russell at least ensures that some sense of structure is maintained.

With a line-up including Andy Sheppard, Chris Baceo and Ian Carr, Russell revives a number of pieces including *Six Aesthetic Gravities* and his arrangement of the modal classic *So What*. His interest in medieval forms is demonstrated, if only fleetingly, in *La Polara: The Rocelle Variations*.

As for the compilation of live work by Rahsaan Roland Kirk, the outcome is much like the man himself: by turns magnificent and maddeningly wayward. The record is part of a new series of amateur tape



Kirk: multiple blowing



ERIC FRASER 1902-1983 ARTIST, HUMORIST, CARICATURIST. HIS FIRST MAJOR EXHIBITION.

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Royal College of Art, Kensington Gore, London SW7 2EU, on March 27th-April 19th. Monday-Friday 10am-6pm Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays 10am-5pm. Admission free.

British Gas

"VERY FUNNY. FILM OF THE WEEK"

the whole cast is faultless" Barry Norman - Film 91

"Mike Leigh's latest film 'Life is Sweet' is unreservedly good, witty, relevant and poignant" Observer Magazine

"...Hilarious... A crowd pleaser with a cutting edge" Alexander Walker - The Standard

"Great stuff. Mike Leigh's best feature film to date. A splendid follow up to 'High Hopes' TRULY MAGNIFICENT" Steve Grant - Time Out



Life is Sweet

a new comedy by Mike Leigh

Film Four International and British Screen Present a Thin Men Films production of a Mike Leigh film 'Life is Sweet' starring Alison Steadman Jim Broadbent Timothy Spall Claire Skinner Jane Horrocks David Thewlis Mo'Nique Brady and Stephen Rea Sound recorded Malcolm Hirst production designer Alison Chitty music by Rachel Portman director of photography Dick Pope edited by Ian Gregory produced by Simon Channing-Williams and directed by Mike Leigh A Palace Pictures Release

now showing


Lumiere ST MARTINS LANE WC2 PHONE 071 279 3014 1.55 4.10 6.30 8.50 Fri/Sat 11.15pm

GATE CINEMA 12.00 2.15 4.30 6.45 9.00 Fri/Sat 11.15pm

SUCCESS IN ACTIVE TING A TING ON INCOME COAST AND IN A TION

ITV

6.00 The Channel Four Daily
9.25 Poetry Book: David Jason reads Edward Lear's The Jumbles
9.30 California Off Beat: More reports from America's Golden state - a look at the dreams of some Californians (r)
0.00 The West of the Imagination: Continuing the series about how the myth of the Wild West was created with a look at two men who helped start the cult of the American cowboy (r)
1.00 Fragile Earth: Presque Isle: Documentary about a controversial engineering scheme to stop the movement of a peninsula on the shores of Lake Erie (r)
2.00 The Parliament Programme presented by Sue Cameron
2.30 Business Daily with Susannah Simons
1.00 Sesame Street: Educational fun for the very young



Portrait of an unyielding loyalist: the Rev Ian Paisley (2.00pm)



(Kevin Lloyd) as DCI Reid (Carolyn Priddy) blows his cover and queries his expenses. (Oracle)



Marriage of convenience: Joanna Kanaka, Nigel Havers (8.30pm)

8.30 A Slight Hitch.



Stars for a night: curtain up on Folkestone's past (9.30pm)

[illegible]

Reichard 1.25 *Style File* 1.10 *Search*
Tomorrow 1.35 *The Edge of Night* 2.00
Tomorrow 2.00 *Lifestyle Plus* 2.35 *History*
Tomorrow 2.35 *History* 3.00 *55 Live*
05 Dec 4.35 *Great American Gameshow*
06 *The Safe-Home Shopping Channel*
06 *Cave 12.00 The Safe-Home Shopping*
Channel 12.00 *Savesto Justice*

THE MOVIE CHANNEL

Use the Macropointo satellite.
Allison who has Seen the Wind? (1977) A
young boy who is in Saskatchewan during the
depression. Starring Brian Burroughs
30 *The Movie Show*
00 Here Comes the Groom (1951)
Musical comedy starring Jane Wyman and
Robert Taylor
00 *Short Circuit 2* (1988)
The numismatic military robot explores New
York City. Starring Christopher Pennock
and Christopher Pennock
00 *Cherry Party* (1984) A young boy's doll
eyes host to the spirit of a serial killer
investigator. Catherine Hicks and Chris
Rock
30 *The Movie Show*

10.00 *Slaves of New York* (1969) Adapted
from James Jewett's short story collection
of the same name. Bernadette Peters plays
a young woman who has to deal with
problems. Co-stars Gene Siskel
12.05am *Perfect People* (1988) Is an
attempt to rejuvenate their youth and
the lives of Laura Linney and Perry King
arrives at a health club
1.35 *Northanger* (1987) An American singer
brought back to life by a ghost who
when she first to break into new territory
Starring Laura Branning and Michael
Adams Ends at 3.25

THE SPORTS CHANNEL

Use the Macropointo satellite.
1.30pm Live Test Match Channel 8.00 live
Teach 9.30 Live Test Match Channel 10.00
Australian Rugby League 12.00 Test Match
Channel 1.00am Australian Rugby League

THE POWER STATION

Use the Macropointo satellite.
7.00am Twenty-one hours of rock and pop

Map

MOVIES

© The Astra satellite.

10.00 Cold Fire 1982: Two children are sent to hell for themselves when their father is on a camping trip. Starring Sammi Smith. Pat Patterson and Richard Jeacock. 2.00 Bright Eyes (1934, rev. Shirley Temple). "You the Good Guy" Lillian Hellman. Harry Belafonte performs fight for custody for the charity-moped.

10.00 A Star Is Born (1936): A crippled starlet's life is enriched by a new pop girl singing Peter Beck and Peggy March. © Astaris and Radio Fight (1989). Includes Roman adventures.

10.00 Police Academy 6: City Under Siege (1987). A hilarious sequel to take on the action 'heaven'.

10.00 Entertainment Tonight.

10.00 Married to the Mob (1989): Gangster comedy in which FBI agent Matthew Modine plays mobster's widow Michelle Pfeiffer to escape from her Mafia connections.

10.00 Mark Goodson's 7-11: 10.00 Moby Campt 12.00-2.00 Boats

SPORTS

© The Astra satellite.

6.30 World Action Auto 7.30 Darts! Cup Golf 8.30 Live Pro Boxing 10.00 SuperGolfers 11.00 Hockey 11.30 Hockey

Canada 1.00/20 Superbody to Race 2.00 Powerboats International 3.00 Joe Hockey 4.00 Hockey 5.00 Hockey 6.00 Hockey 7.00 Hockey 8.00 Hockey 9.00 Hockey 10.00 Hockey 11.00 Hockey 12.00 Hockey

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11.00 Live US PGA. The Players Championship 11.00 Hockey

MTV

© The Astra satellite.

Twenty-four hours of rock and pop

LIFESTYLE

© The Astra satellite.

10.00am Great American Gameshow 11.15 Coffee Break 11.20 Everyday Workout 11.40 Show Stop! 12.15pm Glee

PM Stereo and MTV 6.00am Gary Glay 6.30 Philo Schatzed 8.00 Sami Ben 12.30pm News 12.45 Gary Denver 3.00 Dave News 4.00 Dave News 5.00 Dave News 6.00 Dave News 7.00 Dave News 8.00 Dave News 9.00 Dave News 10.00 Dave News 11.00 Dave News 12.00 Dave News

PM Stereo 4.00am Auto Later The Early Show 4.00am Rock Struck 7.30 Derek Jackson 8.00 Kate Sells 11.00 Jimmy Jynny 1.05pm Gary Glay 2.00 Gary Glay 3.00 Gary Glay 4.00 Gary Glay 5.00 Gary Glay 6.00 Gary Glay 7.00 Gary Glay 8.00 Gary Glay 9.00 Gary Glay 10.00 Gary Glay 11.00 Gary Glay 12.00 Gary Glay

6.30am World Soccer Newsbreak 8.30am Soccer 9.00am Soccer 10.00am Soccer 11.00am Soccer 12.00am Soccer 1.00pm Soccer 2.00pm Soccer 3.00pm Soccer 4.00pm Soccer 5.00pm Soccer 6.00pm Soccer 7.00pm Soccer 8.00pm Soccer 9.00pm Soccer 10.00pm Soccer 11.00pm Soccer 12.00pm Soccer

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Management Week

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FRANK
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AND LOWE B&B
MANAGER IS
FRANK

WILL PETER
FRANKSON

HOW TO ASK
THE RIGHT
QUESTIONS

WILL C. LAMER
FRANKSON
FRANKSON
FRANKSON

ALAN
SUGAR:
WHY HE
DOESN'T
GIVE A DAMN



FRANKSON
FRANKSON
FRANKSON
FRANKSON

FOR EVERYONE WHO NEEDS TO MANAGE - THE
MAGAZINE THAT TELLS YOU HOW AND MUCH MORE

Management Week

NEWSAGENTS NOW. £1

[illegible]

INTERIOR DECORATING
paint, wallpaper, tiles,
brushes, adhesives,
paste tables—B&Q have
everything you need.



J Laing
tumbles
to £20.1n

The damage to the
market was done by
the fact that the
value of the
shares of the
company had
fallen to a level
of 20p. The
company had
been trading
at a loss for
several years
and the market
was not willing
to pay more
than 20p for
the shares.

H&C down
David Heston
at Heston &
Company. A
company which
has been in
business for
over 100 years
and is now
trading at a
loss. The
company has
been trading
at a loss for
several years
and the market
was not willing
to pay more
than 20p for
the shares.

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Nissan dealer
at Heston &
Company. A
company which
has been in
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over 100 years
and is now
trading at a
loss. The
company has
been trading
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several years
and the market
was not willing
to pay more
than 20p for
the shares.

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has been in
business for
over 100 years
and is now
trading at a
loss. The
company has
been trading
at a loss for
several years
and the market
was not willing
to pay more
than 20p for
the shares.

THE POUND
US dollar
1742.00
German mark
2.96
Exchange index
82.2

STOCK MARKET
FT 30 Share
3953.12
FT-SE 100
2646.62
New York Dow Jones
2918.34
Tokyo Nikkei Avg
2804.65

CURRENCY
US dollar
1742.00
German mark
2.96
Exchange index
82.2

INTEREST RATES
Bank of England
12 months
10.50
6 months
10.00
3 months
9.50
Overnight
9.00

DECORATING

B&Q Professional
Viny Mott or Silk Emulsion
Pure Brilliant White
10 LITRES
£15.99
each

Dulux
Dulux Professional
Brilliant White
5 LITRES
£11.99
each

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If you find you've bought more rolls than you require simply return them, unopened, accompanied by the receipt, within 28 days of purchase and we will give a full refund. See in store for full details of our refund and exchange policies.

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Iridescent No. 4411 and 4421)
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Vinyl (featuring Vinyl
Iridescent No. 7.48m x 1.22m x 0.4mm
£4.99

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In cream or platinum
colours
15 x 15cm (approx.)
£9.99

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In cream or platinum
colours
15 x 15cm (approx.)
£4.99

Relief
In cream or platinum
colours
15 x 15cm (approx.)
£8.99

B&Q Non Slip All Purpose
Ceramic Wall Tiles
In cream or platinum
colours
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£14.99
each

Handy Spade Deck
Fresh Timber Deck
75' x 30' x 1/4"
£14.99
each

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Fresh Timber Deck
75' x 30' x 1/4"
£14.99
each

Handy Spade Deck
Fresh Timber Deck
75' x 30' x 1/4"
£14.99
each

TIMBER & DOORS

Handy Spade Deck
Fresh Timber Deck
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£14.99
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Handy Spade Deck
Fresh Timber Deck
75' x 30' x 1/4"
£14.99
each

Handy Spade Deck
Fresh Timber Deck
75' x 30' x 1/4"
£14.99
each

Handy Spade Deck
Fresh Timber Deck
75' x 30' x 1/4"
£14.99
each

Handy Spade Deck
Fresh Timber Deck
75' x 30' x 1/4"
£14.99
each

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Motor Oil
5 Litre
£3.49

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Motor Oil
5 Litre
£3.49

B&Q 20W/50
Motor Oil
5 Litre
£3.49

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Electric Mower
18" Cut
£44.99

Black & Decker
Electric Mower
18" Cut
£44.99

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Electric Mower
18" Cut
£44.99

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Electric Mower
18" Cut
£44.99

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Specially formulated to
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and balconies
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Specially formulated to
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and balconies
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BUSINESS

THURSDAY MARCH 28 1991

Business Editor
John Bell

J Laing tumbles to £20.1m

JOHN Laing's heavy exposure to housebuilding in the South-east had the inevitable impact on pre-tax profits in the year to end-December, which tumbled 65 per cent to £20.1 million.

The damage was done by a marked fall in operating profits at Laing's homes division, falling from £33.3 million to £5.8 million. Write-downs in the value of the company's land bank in the Southeast was taken as a £12 million exceptional item.

As a result, operations failed to contribute significantly, but there was an impressive performance by Laing's construction division where operating profits rose from £25.9 million to £27.8 million. The final dividend of 10p makes 13p, both unchanged, but earnings per share fell from 43.4p to 15.2p.

Comment, page 27

H&C down

David Hopkinson is retiring in September as chairman of Harrison & Crossfield, the diversified conglomerate, and will be succeeded by John Maltby, former chairman and chief executive of Birmah Oil. H&C's pre-tax profits for the year to end-December fell to £106 million (£131 million). A final dividend of 5.4p makes a total of 9.0p (8.3p). The group is selling its North American magazine business, part of Harcos Pigments, for \$15 million and re-investing the proceeds in Northern Pigments for £8.43 million.

Times, page 27

Nissan dealer

NISSAN, the car manufacturer, is to set up its own dealer network at a cost of £40 million as it attempts to strip Nissan UK, the independent British company run by Octavia Botnar, of its sole distribution rights. Nissan Motor (GB) will be based northwest of the M25 at a site yet to be decided, and will create 357 jobs.

Nissan's aim, page 27

Bunzl holds

Bunzl, the distribution and cigarette filter group, held its 1990 dividend at 5.9p despite pre-tax profits down 17 per cent at £54.3 million. The shares rose 14p to 96p in a buoyant market.

Times, page 27

US dollar

1.7428 (-0.0112)

German mark

2.9662 (+0.0077)

Exchange index

92.2 (same)

FT 30 Share

1965.9 (+22.7)

FT-SE 100

2464.6 (+27.0)

New York Dow Jones

2916.34 (+1.49)

Tokyo Nikkei Avg

26104.65 (-234.73)

RISER:

BPI 3021p (+25p)

Amesbury 753p (+10p)

Unilever 752p (+10p)

Wellcome 518p (+15p)

Sainsbury 852p (+8p)

FMG Group 685p (+10p)

McCarthy & Stone 1111p (+14p)

J Laing 318p (+15p)

Stavros 180p (+25p)

Guinness 804p (+15p)

Reuter 881p (+13p)

Telecom 190p (+25p)

Wendell 405p (+10p)

News Corp 30p (+8p)

Bover 478p (+3p)

De La Rue 200p (+5p)

Burns & McDonnell 587p (+21p)

FALLS:

Essex 929p (-18p)

Cash 187p (-11p)

European Assets 225p (-12p)

Closing Prices...Page 31

London: Bank Base: 12 1/4%

3-month interbank 12 1/4-12 1/2%

3-month visible bills 11 3/4-11 7/8%

US: Prime Rate 9%

Federal Funds Rate 8 1/4%

3-month Treasury Bill 5.83-5.81%

30-year bond 9 5/8-9 5/16%

London: FT 30 Share

1965.9 (+22.7)

FT-SE 100

2464.6 (+27.0)

New York: Dow Jones

2916.34 (+1.49)

Tokyo: Nikkei Avg

26104.65 (-234.73)

REUTERS: 1300 February (1985-1990)

Denotes latest trading price

Saddam link to British firms revealed

By ANGELA MACKAY

AT LEAST six of 32 companies in Britain being investigated by Kroll Associates, the Wall Street detective agency tracking investments of Saddam Hussein, can be traced back to a Baghdad-based company, according to records in Companies House.

Kroll, which has been hired by the Kuwaiti government, has also identified that a director of one of the companies was also head of Iraq's biggest military procurement agency, Nasser State Enterprise, established by Saddam Hussein's son-in-law.

Most of the companies are small engineering and machine tool groups sharing common directors and addresses. Records in Companies House show that Al Arabi Trading, the Baghdad holding company, directly owns Technology & Development Group and TMG Engineering, based in Chiswick, and indirectly controls Newcastle Foundries, and until last month owned Matrix Churchill (UK) and Matrix Churchill (UK).

These companies in turn share directors either now or in the past four years with IPC International, Marble Hill Engineering, TMG Engineering, AWA Engineering, Investcast Precision Castings, Meed International and TEG Ltd. Kroll has been working in association with the Wash-

ington-based Office of Foreign Asset Control which is also due to publish a 30-page list of companies suspected of being controlled by Saddam Hussein. This international list includes the 32 companies isolated by Kroll which have been identified by *The Times*, in addition to several more UK-based groups.

The Kuwaiti government is working to expose the extent of Saddam's allegedly illegal investments outside Iraq to add muscle to a campaign to force its enemy to pay war reparations.

Kroll said Saddam had been skimming profits off the top of oil export revenue and several other investments. T&D Group, which has an unlisted telephone number, has been dogged by bad debts over the past three years. Lloyds Bank in Bond Street had a mortgage over a property in Stratford Place in the West End and also a charge over other assets and income. This relates to debts of almost £30,000. Bradford and Bingley, the building society, was owed £3 million and also had a charge over Stratford Place. Companies House records do not show that the mortgage or charges have been removed.

T&D was capitalised at £100 and according to the last accounts filed at Companies House, made a pre-tax profit of £2.7 million in 1989 compared with a loss of £5.7 million previously. The last return of T&D

dated December 1990 lists Hana P Jon as company secretary, Dr Fadel Kadum, Safa Al-Habobi and Adnan Al-Amir as directors.

Mr Al-Habobi was also the director general of Iraq's biggest military procurement agency, Nasser State Enterprise, which was established by Saddam's son-in-law.

The only British director listed, Robert Khoshaba, resigned in August 1990.

These men also served as directors of TMG Engineering, Newcastle Foundries, and Matrix Churchill. One of their associates, Anees Mansoor Wadi, who along with two British nationals based in Essex, Roy and Linda Ricks, were board members of RWR International, registered as an engineering consultancy. They are also closely connected with Meed International, Investcast Precision Castings, Euroabre and AWA Engineering.

Euroabre and T&D Group injected £4 million into TMG in August 1988. Before then, TMG was capitalised at £200.

Mr Wadi who could not be contacted at his Duke Street headquarters yesterday, is being investigated by OFAC and three days ago had his assets in America frozen by the US Treasury.

British authorities said they were looking into Mr Wadi's activities in the UK.

Pound climbs above DM2.97

By COLIN NARBROUGH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE pound advanced within the European exchange-rate mechanism, climbing above DM2.97 and is ready to scale higher ground if the government holds the line on interest rates, as the market expects.

Sterling ended the day as the third strongest currency in the parity grid, after briefly holding second place. Spain and Italy are above it.

Although the pound is well above its DM2.95 central rate, hopes of an early cut in base rates remained muted. In the money market, the key three-month interbank rate ended unchanged at 12 1/4 per cent. Sterling closed more than a cent lower at \$1.742 in London, but three-quarters of a penny higher at DM2.9661, below its best. The trade-weighted index was steady at 92.2.

No base rate move is expected until after Easter, with the authorities keen to see the outcome of the Bundesbank council meeting next Thursday. Even after that, economists believe the government is likely to leave base rates unchanged to gain credibility for its counter-inflationary policy.

Two early waves of central bank intervention, led by the Bundesbank, failed to stop the dollar's rise. A comment from Theo Waigel, the German finance minister, that America and Germany "can live with the stronger dollar", appeared to counter any effect the intervention was intended to have. Concern about the east

German economy and political unrest in eastern Europe continue to depress the mark, which fell to DM1.7105 against the dollar in Frankfurt, its lowest close for almost a year.

Expectations of the American economy recovering fuelled the dollar climb, as did news of a payment of Germany's \$1.7 billion tranche of Gulf money to Washington. The dollar ended in London at DM1.6975 to the DM1.7100. The US commerce department has reduced its estimate of the decline in economic activity, amid signs of improving consumer confidence in America after the end of the Gulf war (Susan Elliott writes from Washington).

The latest estimate came as Nicholas Brady, the treasury secretary, said the Bush administration had seen in recent economic reports "the first tangible signs of a turnaround" in the recession.

In a second and final estimate of gross national product in the final three months of 1990, the federal government said activity fell 1.6 per cent, compared with the 2 per cent fall previously estimated. Part of the improvement arose from an upward revision in exports of manufactured goods.

Mr Brady said a 16.5 per cent rise last month in house building and a 7.9 per cent increase in house sales gave cause for optimism, as did a surge in consumer confidence.

AMEC seeks to raise £111m

By GEORGE SIVELL

AMEC, the engineering and construction group, added to the recent spate of cash demands on shareholders' pockets with a £111 million call to finance selective acquisitions on mainland Europe.

Simultaneously, the group revealed a fall in pre-tax profits from £91.3 million to £63.4 million, compensated by a rise in the total dividend from 9.5p to 10.13p out of the earnings down from 26.1p to 18.3p. Sales rose from £1.99 billion to £2.22 billion.

The shares fell 8p to 240p in reaction to the cash call of one share at 200p for each four held. They rebounded to close at 246p. As expected, Amec's housing and property operations suffered, falling from a profit of £41.5 million to just £700,000 before interest.

Building and civil engineering rose from £26.9 million to £30.3 million and mechanical and electrical engineering surged ahead from £26.3 million to £38.6 million.

The cash call will also affect holders of the convertibles, which were issued in the £82 million cash call in 1988. New convertible preference shares are offered on the basis of 12.195 for each 100 held.

Alan Cockshaw, the chairman, said this year is expected to be another difficult year, but longer term prospects justify the policy of continued dividend growth.

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Critics silenced: Geoffrey Mulcahy, whose Woolworth strategy has paid off

Woolworth's fortunes change for the better

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH

GEOFFREY Mulcahy, the chief executive of Kingfisher, has confounded critics of his strategy for Woolworth, once one of the worst performing retailers on the high street. The chain now has the biggest share of the home entertainment, confectionery and toys market and claims to be the best performing mixed merchandise store in Britain.

Woolworth contributed £63 million at the operating level to Kingfisher's profits in the year to February 2, a rise of 13 per cent on last year. Pre-tax profits before exceptional items for the whole group rose 4 per cent to £215 million on sales up 7 per cent at £3.12 billion. Earnings rose 4 per cent to 30.9p a share and the final dividend is 8.4p, making 12.2p for the year, up 6.1 per cent. There was a £37 million (£87.3 million) exceptional profit from property sales and leasebacks.

Kingfisher's results exceeded market expectations, with the group bucking the trend in its Superdrug, Woolworth and B&Q chains. The shares rose 13p to 457p. Superdrug's profits rose 16 per cent to £34.5 million and those at B&Q rose 10 per cent to £95.7 million. Comet, the electricals chain, was disappointing, with profits down 58 per cent at £7.6 million.

Chartwell Land, the group's property business, saw development profits fall 39 per cent to £11.6 million. During the year, same store sales at Woolworth and Superdrug

rose about 10 per cent, with same store sales at B&Q flat.

Earnings per share rose for the eighth year in succession. Across the retail sector, earnings per share are expected to have fallen by an average of about 10 per cent last year.

Mr Mulcahy said: "The increase in profits has been achieved by concentrating squarely on our core markets, building market share in key areas and continuing to drive for productivity improve-

ments. At Woolworth, rigorous control of costs and close attention to cash management have been of paramount importance."

Almost 1,000 jobs have been cut at Comet in the year, while sales in all the group's divisions in the second half were weaker than the first.

Mr Mulcahy said the recession would continue in the retail sector this year.

Comment, page 27

Saatchi forced to take 50% cut in pay

By NEIL BENNETT

CHARLES and Maurice, the founding brothers of Saatchi & Saatchi, the advertising group, have been forced to accept a cut in salary of more than £300,000 a year after pressure from non-executive directors. Their pay has been reduced by half to a combined total of £312,500 a year. Robert Louis-Dreyfus, the chief executive, has taken a voluntary 40 per cent cut in salary to £300,000 a year.

News of the savings came at Saatchi & Saatchi's extraordinary meeting in London, at which investors overwhelmingly agreed the group's refinancing and £55 million rights issue. Shareholders and holders of the Euro preference and UK preference shares voted more than 99 per cent in favour of the proposals.

Maurice Saatchi, the chairman, said the vote had lifted a cloud of uncertainty that had been hanging over the company for the past two years.

He said: "Now it has been removed, our staff will be able to perform to their full potential." But he warned investors that the recovery would not be fast. "We are in the middle of the worst downturn I have seen in my 20 long years in advertising. I am not promising an instant bonanza."

After the vote, he thanked shareholders for their support and said the group had one aim. "We want to restore the wealth of the shareholders which has been dissipated in the last two years." The shares fell 1p to 19 1/2p after the meeting, compared to a peak of more than 70p.

Thomas Russell, one of the non-executive directors who joined the group a year ago, said three firms of consultants had advised on the directors' salaries. Total pay had been cut by 62 per cent this year to £1.5 million. He said: "The cuts were not intended to be punitive, but to reflect the company's level of profitability. The consultants decided that Mr Dreyfus's salary was low against industry standards, but he has taken a voluntary reduction."

Mr Saatchi said he did not blame anyone for the launch of the Euro preference shares in 1988, with a £211 million put option that forced the group to refinance. "Those were very different times. The issue was clearly a mistake."

Comment, page 27

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Persimmon seeks £33m to buy land

By OUR CITY STAFF

PERSIMMON has joined the growing band of house-builders that are raising funds to take advantage of the fall in land prices.

The group, based in York, is to raise £33 million, after expenses, via a two-for-eleven rights issue. The new shares are priced at 238p, a 15.6 per cent discount to yesterday's opening price of 282p.

Helped by the promise of a rise of at least 20 per cent in dividends, the issue went down well, with Persimmon's shares closing just 3p lower at 279p. The board proposes to pay a dividend of at least 8.6p (7.15p) in the year to end-December. The issue has been fully underwritten by Hambros Bank.

The money will be used to buy housebuilding land, continuing a policy of funding the land bank through shareholders' funds and work in progress through debt.

The company made pre-tax profits of £28.8 million last year, 11 per cent down on 1989. Similar profits are expected this year, with a rise to as much as £50 million expected next year.

Duncan Davidson, the chairman, and his family will not take up their rights, but will retain a 36.1 per cent stake in the enlarged share capital of the company.

Slide in property values hits Slough's net assets

By MATTHEW BOND

NET assets per share at Slough Estates, Britain's fourth biggest property company, have fallen to their lowest for three years, as a rise in borrowings coincided with a 13.3 per cent fall in the value of its investment portfolio.

The value of Slough's trade portfolio, largely properties it builds to sell on, has also fallen, forcing the company to make a £63.8 million exceptional provision, reducing the book value to £211.4 million. Although operating profits on ordinary activities rose from £81.8 million to £86.4 million in the year to end-December, the provisions resulted in pre-tax profits falling 72 per cent to £22.6 million.

Despite the sharp fall in profits Sir Nigel Mobbs, the chairman, announced an increased final dividend of 7.15p (6.6p), making 11.35p (10.8p). The dividend is covered by earnings per share, which, on a fully diluted basis, fell from 21p to 9.9p and required a £9.3 million transfer from reserves.

Sir Nigel described the results as disappointing, but said the increased dividend reflected the board's continuing confidence in the future prospects of the group. He said the

current state of the commercial property market was unprecedented in his experience. "Never can I think of a time when conditions have been so adverse for property investment and development."

The pre-tax profits were struck after only £24.5 million of interest charges was taken through the profit and loss account, out of a total net interest bill of over £84.3 million. The balance of £59.8 million was capitalised and added to the cost of both trading and investment properties.

At the year end, borrowings had risen from £803 million to £835 million, while cash had declined from £99.3 million to £10.4 million. Against shareholders' funds of £1,079 million, year-end gearing was 76 per cent.

During the year, expenditure on the development programme peaked at £250 million, as the company completed 2.6 million sq ft of space. This year, Sir Nigel said, it was likely to be less than £100 million.

Net assets per share fell from 46.4p to 37.5p, a fall of 19.2 per cent, and 7p lower than the net assets per share reported at the end of 1988.

The continuing fall in property values drove net assets lower. External valuations prepared by Richard Ellis and Hillier Parker resulted in the value of the company's British investment portfolio being reduced by 14.2 per cent. Slough's core holding of industrial properties was the best performer, falling in value by 8.9 per cent. Office values declined by 22.1 per cent, while retail property values fell 16.7 per cent.

With the slide in British property values being echoed in other parts of the world, the value of Slough's total investment portfolio fell from £1.87 billion to £1.63 billion. British property accounts for about 76 per cent of the portfolio. Apart from values falling in Canada, America and Australia, the company also lost out on currency movement during the year, wiping £66.6 million off the sterling value of the portfolio.



Confident: Sir Nigel Mobbs, of Slough Estates

Lamont failed to produce reforming Budget, says IFS

By COLIN NARBOROUGH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE increase in value added tax to reduce the poll tax by £140 per person, was a shift to at worst a mildly regressive form of taxation, Andrew Dilnot, director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies said.

The overall view of the IFS of Norman Lamont's first Budget was that he had failed, despite his claim to have made radical tax changes, to produce what will be remembered as an important reforming Budget, such as those in 1979 and 1988. Mr Dilnot told an

IFS seminar that it was "non-sense" to claim that VAT was more regressive than the community charge it is, in part, intended to offset.

His calculations show that the Budget changes mean that the proportion of income used on VAT will fall slightly, the higher one moves up the earnings scale, while the proportion of spending on the indirect tax will rise. "It is mildly regressive, or progressive, depending how you look at it," Mr Dilnot said.

Though the worst off stood to gain the least from the poll tax-VAT switch, he said the move made sense in terms of distribution. "It cannot be attacked as regressive."

Mr Dilnot is sympathetic towards the view expressed by Nigel Lawson, the former Chancellor, that the Budget might as well have taken tax-raising out of local authority hands.

As to whether Mr Lamont's Budget indicated a reforming chancellor, Mr Dilnot said: "There were signs of promise, but no turning point on tax policy."

But he saw the reduction in tax relief on benefit in kind, such as company cars and mobile telephones, as a welcome development that was consistent with policy pursued by successive Conservative chancellors.

Limiting mortgage tax relief to the basic rate of income tax was seen as a reflection of Mr Lamont's determination to prevent rapid house price inflation. It also probably demonstrated that Mins is on the way out and worries about increases are over.

IFS estimates show that the combination of changes in tax relief on housing and threshold increases in allowances leave the higher rate taxpayer with a mortgage of more than £30,000 about £9 a week worse off.

The IFS does not regard the Budget as anti-business. Reduced benefits in kind hit the rich harder, but are not seen to be overtaxing business.

Burmah beats City forecasts

By MARTIN BARROW

BURMAH Castrol, the lubricants and specialty chemicals group that acquired Fosco after a £259 million hostile takeover bid, increased net income from £97.8 million to £103.4 million last year, ahead of City expectations.

The results reflected strong growth in lubricants and fuels, offset by the recession in the British and American chemicals industry, and adverse currency movements, which trimmed profits by about £4 million. Earnings were 52.9p a share, against 52.1p. A final dividend of 14.5p makes 23p (21.5p) for the year. The shares rose from 566p to 587p.

Lawrence Urquhart, the chairman and chief executive, said the integration of Fosco's metallurgical and construction chemicals activities was proceeding according to plan. He said: "There are sound underlying businesses in Fosco, if somewhat confused and disorganised." After the takeover, gearing rose from 27 per cent to 60 per cent.

Pre-tax profits were £164.9 million (£164.4 million), but net income benefited from a taxation charge 8 per cent lower at £61.5 million.

Turnover net of duties was £1.72 billion (£1.64 billion). Lubricants, which includes Castrol and is the company's most significant earner, increased trading profits from £120.1 million to £128 million despite the volatility of oil markets, particularly in the second half.

The contribution from fuels rose from £18.2 million to £22.7 million through a combination of acquisitions and organic growth.

Profits from the transportation of liquefied natural gas were £20.3 million (£20.8 million) on record cargo levels. The business was fully-owned during the first half of 1989, but was 50-per cent owned last year.

Profits from chemicals fell to £11.1 million (£17.1 million). Central management costs were up from £5.2 million to £9 million, including £1.1 million for a reorganisation.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Groupe Bull promises drastic restructuring

GROUPE Bull, the French state-owned computer firm, has promised a drastic restructuring programme and large-scale redundancies, to allow a return to profits by the end of next year. Bull reported a net loss of Fr6.79 billion (Fr267 million loss). The losses were inflated by the provision of Fr3.62 billion for a restructuring programme that involves worldwide job losses of 8,500.

Despite the financial difficulties, the company remains committed to continued spending on research and development, which accounts for about 11 per cent of turnover. Roger Fauroux, the French industry minister who has promised government funds to aid the company's R&D efforts, is likely to meet opposition from the European Commission.

HK Bank shares halted

HONGKONG and Shanghai Banking Corp shares have been suspended in London and Hong Kong pending relisting, the International Stock Exchange said. The shares will be relisted under a London-registered holding company on April 8. The parent will be known as HSBC Holdings. The bank intends to keep its management in Hong Kong.

Publisher to raise £3.3m

STERLING Publishing is offering shareholders £3.34 million of convertible shares on a basis of one new share for every nine ordinary shares held. The company said it will use the proceeds to reduce borrowings but that results for this year will be below previous projections. The final dividend will be cut to 1p from 4.5p, making 2.5p for the year.

Frogmore slumps

FIRST half profits at Frogmore Estates, the property company, have slumped from £20 million in 1989 to £2.2 million in the six months to end-December. Profits on the sale of investment properties were £18 million in 1989, but £4 million for the period last reported. Property trading activities made a £1.9 million loss after the value of trading properties was written down by £5.7 million. At the half year end Frogmore had borrowings of £36.5 million, now £3 million. The interim dividend is increased to 3.2p a share (2.9p).

Recession hope for Scots

THE latest Quarterly Economic Commentary, published by Strathclyde University's Fraser of Allander Institute, predicts that the current recession will be less pronounced in Scotland than in the UK as a whole, due to lower consumer borrowing, export performance and the North Sea exploration mini-boom.

Barclays loss in Australia

BARCLAYS Bank's Australian subsidiary suffered a net loss of Aus\$117 million (£51.4 million) last year after a Aus\$79.8 million loss in 1989. The bank had to make a Aus\$129 million provision against bad debts, almost Aus\$50 million higher than the previous year. It blamed the provisions on the country's weak economy.

Caird earns £7.2m

CAIRD Group, the waste disposal company that survived a £78 million hostile bid by Severn Trent, earned pre-tax profits of £7.2 million for the 18 months to the end of December, compared with a revised forecast of £7.15 million. Before the bid, Caird forecast profits of £8.5 million. Fully diluted earnings were 6.2p a share, against 7.8p for the 12 months to the end of 1989. A final dividend of 1.2p a share is declared, making 3.57p for the 18-month period. The equivalent for the previous 18-month period, after adjusting for a capitalisation issue, was 2.67p a share.

Ferrari write-off pushes Singer £1.2m into red

By NEIL BENNETT, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

SINGER & Friedlander, the merchant banking group, has admitted to a £13.9 million loss on its investment in Ferrari Holdings, the failed computer distributor. The write-off pushed Singer into a net loss of £1.21 million last year, compared with a £14.6 million profit in 1989.

Singer held a 35 per cent stake in Ferrari, which went into receivership this month. John Hodson, Singer's chief executive, said he felt "very uncomfortable" with the loss, but that the group had made an £18 million unrealised profit on two other investments in Takare, the nursing home operator, and ACT, the

computer group. Mr Hodson said Singer had done everything possible to save Ferrari, including making a change in management, but the problems had been apparent for some time. He said the group would not make further large equity investments until it redeems a £32 million loan stock issue next year.

Pre-tax profits before the provision fell 32 per cent to £15.1 million because of a slump in banking business. Singer also suffered the first bad debt in its history. Despite this, the group maintained its final dividend at 1.5p to make an unchanged payout for the year of 2.5p.

"This year's record level of capital expenditure reflects our commitment to building on our position as the premier supplier of equipment to the food and beverage industries."

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

For the year ended 31 December	1990	1989	Change %
Turnover	£928.1m	£844.4m	9.9
Return on sales before exceptional items	6.0%	7.8%	
Profit before tax	£40.2m	£60.6m	(33.7)
Earnings per ordinary share	9.0p	14.1p	(36.2)
Dividends per ordinary share	5.4p	5.4p	—
Shareholders' funds	£138.1m	£131.2m	5.3
Gearing	40.4%	41.7%	

THE YEAR IN BRIEF

- Attack on cost base and restructuring of businesses will result in significant benefits from 1991 onwards.
- Major new factory at Peterborough to house Group's UK dry food business on schedule for completion in 1991.
- Copies of the Annual Report will be available after 23 April 1991 from APV plc, 1 Lygon Place, London SW1W 0JF.
- Balance sheet strengthened by £64 million reduction in stocks and debtors.



Cash call proceeds help lift Hogg Group 25%

By OUR CITY STAFF

HOGG Group, the acquisitive international insurance broker, jumped the current rights issue queue with a £15 million cash call last year and reaped the benefit in higher profits and dividends.

Most of the rights issue proceeds have not yet been used to finance acquisitions, but the cash helped boost

investment income and sharply cut interest charges. Pre-tax profits rose 25 per cent to £17.05 million in 1990, and on a comparable basis after adjusting for an accounting change were 19 per cent ahead at £16.2 million. "We believe the timing of the issue was right," James Vaughan, the chairman, said.

Mr Vaughan said that trading conditions had been diffi-

cult. Overcapacity and premium rate cutting continued through the year but insurance markets were beginning to tackle the problems that had hit the industry in the past few years.

Weakness in the Australian and American dollars had an adverse impact on overseas profits. But in London, the American brokerages hedged successfully to give a higher profit.

Also, the group repaid its Australian borrowings when the dollar was at its weakest point, realising a substantial exchange profit. As a result, currency fluctuations had a neutral net effect on Hogg Group profits.

Insurance broking profits rose from £8.3 million to £11.9 million, while Lloyd's Members Agencies contributed £1.04 million against £700,000 in the previous 12 months. But profits from Divested Managing Agencies fell from £3.6 million previously to £2.9 million.

The final dividend rises from 4.5p per share to 5p, making a total for the year of 8p per share, compared with 7.25p. Earnings per share climbed 11 per cent to 16.41p from 14.8p. Hogg Group shares rose 6p to 201p.

LET slips in first year under Swedish control

By OUR CITY STAFF

LONDON & Edinburgh Trust, whose subsidiary Owen Owen has bought five Lewis's stores from the receiver for £10 million, has reported pre-tax profits of £35.1 million for the year to end-December, 48 per cent down on 1989.

The full-year figures are the first to be reported since the company was taken over by SPP, the Swedish insurance and pension group, last April in a deal that valued LET at close to £500 million.

John Beckwith, the chairman of LET, said the Swedes

had invested £150 million in LET since the takeover. Largely as a result of this support, shareholders' funds had advanced from £439.7 million to £536.5 million by year-end, since when SPP has injected a further £27 million.

The group's European activities contributed £16.7 million towards pre-tax profits. However, Mr Beckwith gave warning that some European markets may now also be turning down. Activities in leisure and American property incurred losses.

COMPANY BRIEFS

JEYES GROUP (Fin)
Pre-tax: £3.56m (£2.36m)
EPS: 16.5p (16.2p)
Div: 3.2p, mkg 5.4p

PRESSAC HOLDINGS (Int)
Pre-tax: £1.15m (£1.02m)
EPS: 4.13p (3.7p)
Div: 0.75p (0.75p)

SEWROSE CORP (Fin)
Pre-tax: £4.91m (£3.84m)
EPS: 23.21p (13.89p)
Div: 7.45p, mkg 11.75p

GOAL PETROLEUM (Fin)
Pre-tax: £10.58m (£5.2m)
EPS: 4.24p (1.82p)
Div: 1.1p (1p)

PSION (Fin)
Pre-tax: £0.5m (£3.3m)
EPS: 1.19p (10.3p)
Div: 1.4p, mkg 2.4p

DAUPHIN (Fin)
Pre-tax: £3.51m (£4.02m)
EPS: 11.07p (12p)
Div: 3.4p (5.1p)

LIONHEART (Fin)
Pre-tax: £0.7m (£0.4m)
EPS: 0.82p (0.84p loss)
Div: nil (nil)

TUSKAR RESOURCES (Int)
Pre-tax: £120.8m
EPS: 0.44p (2.15p loss)
Div: nil (nil)

MICHAEL PAGE GRP (Fin)
Pre-tax: £4.8m (£5.9m)
EPS: 4.71p (6.05p)
Div: 1.2p, mkg 1.3p

Total dividend compares with 4.7p previously. Chairman says he is confident company will continue to grow in 1991.

Trading environment for second half "will be difficult", company warns. However, long term prospects "are excellent".

Year end gearing is 44 per cent. Full year dividend compares with 11.3p in 1989. UK trading expected to be very tough in 1991.

Company paid no interim dividend. Oil production 20 per cent up on 1989 due to completion of Wytch Farm development.

Dividend is unchanged on last year. Chairman predicts "resumption of dynamic growth" in 1992 and 1993.

Total dividend is up from 4.8p for 1989. Company is to change its name to Mayfield. Balance sheet shows net cash of £1m.

Figures for 1989 are for 14 month period. Company intends to return to dividend list in 1992 after capital reconstruction.

Company says it is adequately funded at present. Funding options being examined for future development. £4.1m loss in 1989.

Full year dividend unchanged from last year. Profits from first two months of the year down on 1990. Company is "cautious".

PORTMEIRION POTT (Fin)
Pre-tax: £3.42m (£2.78m)
EPS: 23.4p (18.3p)
Div: 6.1p, mkg 7.35p

BRIDPORT-GUNDRY (Int)
Pre-tax: £0.23m (£0.51m)
EPS: 1.54p (3.22p)
Div: 1.5p (1.8p)

AFRICAN LAKES (Fin)
Pre-tax: £1.55m (£1.63m)
EPS: 7.77p (14.63p)
Div: 2p (2p)

ADWEST GROUP (Int)
Pre-tax: £3.1m (£4.3m)
EPS: 3.2p (4.5p)
Div: 1.25p (1.25p)

ATLAS CONVERT (Fin)
Pre-tax: £5.51m (£5.05m)
EPS: 45p (39.7p)
Div: 13p, mkg 19.5p

ROCKWARE GROUP (Fin)
Pre-tax: £9.2m (£10.8m)
EPS: 4.45p (5.54p)
Div: 1.3p, mkg 2.6p

RELYON GROUP (Fin)
Pre-tax: £3.24m (£3.8m)
EPS: 9.28p (11.38p)
Div: 3.15p, mkg 4.3p

MY HOLDINGS (Int)
Pre-tax: £0.4m loss
EPS: 0.81p loss
Div: nil (nil)

MACFARLANE GROUP
Pre-tax: £9.8m (£9.2m)
EPS: 12.72p (12.15p)
Div: 2.352p, mkg 4.034p

Total dividend compares with 6.1p for 1989. Sales and profits in first quarter are down on same time last year.

Chairman says pattern of trading points to a stronger second half that will also benefit from cost savings made in first half.

UK motor trade activities hit by drop in vehicle sales, margin pressure and higher interest rates. No interim dividend.

Chairman warns that "meaningful" reductions in interest rates will be needed before improved trading conditions likely.

Dividend compares with 15p for 1989. Provision of £1.1m made to cover delayed payment from Russian customer.

Full year dividend compares with 2.5p for 1989. Chairman warns that timing of a recovery is still unclear. Turnover is £243.4m.

Payout for year compares with 4.6875p for 1989. Chairman reports progress so far in 1991. Improved profits expected.

Loss for 1989 was £1.5m. Loss per share was 3.58p. Full year results still expected to be "short of acceptable".

Final. Full-year dividend is up 10 per cent on 3.687p payout for 1989. Total dividend increase over last 4 years is 120 per cent.

At last, the wonder of Woolworth

COMMENT

Such has been the evolution of Woolworth over the last six years, that even Charles Darwin would be surprised at how successfully the dinosaur of the high street has been transformed into one of the fittest retail businesses around.

When Geoff Mulcahy, chairman of Kingfisher, Woolworth's parent company, unveiled his Operation Focus strategy six years ago the chain was making a loss of £5.1 million. Since 1986-87 profits have increased by 63 per cent.

In the intervening period the number of product lines has been halved, the number of suppliers has dropped from 6,000 to 1,000 and the number of stores has fallen from 905 to 750. Woolworth's square footage has fallen from 9 million to 6.3 million.

While Woolworth was the one business on the high street which could afford to cut space, the thinking of Mr Mulcahy and his team ran contrary to the perceived wisdom of the day. Nearly every other retailer was competing in the race for space. Under the day to day

management of Mair Barnes, Woolworth has increased sales per square foot and productivity and positioned itself as the biggest retailer of toys, videos and confectionery. It's Ladybird childrenswear brand makes it the third largest in Britain.

But the management team at Kingfisher must now be looking around for a new challenge. In B&Q all they have to do is ride the upside of the DIY roller-coaster when it comes and hang on to the chain's 13.5 per cent market share. Superdrug, an uncomplicated business, has tripled its profits in the last three years and nothing can be done with Chartwell Land until the property market picks up. Only Comet needs hard work to turn it round.

Kingfisher's thwarted bid for Dixons 15 months ago indicates that the team is keen to make a major acquisition and with gearing down to 24 per cent it can afford to do so. Before its merger

with Ward White, Boots must have been a potential target and Mothercare, part of the Storehouse group, has always interested Kingfisher. More recently, Pentos has been rumoured as a likely bid candidate for Woolworth and Argos is an obvious fit. Whoever it bids for, Kingfisher is in a prime position to pick up a bargain in the current recession.

Laing sales

Housing recessions strike different companies in different ways. Yesterday, Persimmon, joining Wilson Bowden in calling on its shareholders for new funds to take advantage of the apparent bargains to be had in the land market. Strangely, it seems only a few

weeks ago that most house-builders were bemoaning the exact opposite — a lack of buying opportunities caused by landowners choosing to sit and wait rather than sell at knock-down prices. Doubtless times have changed.

At John Laing, the directors are trying a different tack. When it comes to housebuilding Laing is predominantly a specialist in the Southeast of England. As a result it has been hit hard by the downturn in sales, with operating profits from its homes division falling from £33.3 million in 1989 to just £5.8 million last year. Provisions against its land bank cost the company a further £12 million.

But unlike Persimmon or Wilson Bowden, Laing will not be rushing to buy land, despite the fact that a net cash position of

£24 million leaves it well placed to do exactly that. In fact chairman Martin Laing intends to do just the opposite by gradually running down its 6,500 plot land bank, which at present levels is already enough to keep the company going for three years.

Mr Laing believes the lesson from the recession, particularly its speed and severity, is that it is not worth gearing up for the good times — and tying up expensive capital — by assembling a long landbank. He hopes for a smoother flow of profits by switching to buying land opportunistically and building it out quickly.

Laing's cash positive balance sheet will give him the muscle to try out his theory. Shareholders in other companies may not be so lucky and will doubtless find that the reward for sticking with a housebuilder during the bad times is a right issue call. There will be few grumbles at Wilson

Bowden or Persimmon, which are first class companies. But beware the third class rights issue.

No Charles

There was an empty seat at Saatchi & Saatchi's extraordinary meeting. Charles Saatchi, the group's co-founder and highly-paid director did not care to attend.

His reticence is nothing new. While this may have been excusable when the group was forging ahead, it is not when Saatchi is beseeching investors to save it from extinction.

Mr Saatchi's absence appears contemptuous of shareholders, many of whom have suffered serious financial injury from the group's dwindling share price. Worse, Maurice Saatchi would offer neither an apology nor an excuse for his brother's non-attendance.

Maurice Saatchi gushed with praise about the shareholders' loyalty at the meeting. They deserved more courtesy from his brother.

Amec taps into right cycle

TEMPUS

AMEC has come a long way since the merger of William Press, the engineering contractor, and Fairclough, the construction group, in 1982, which took most of the Eighties to come right.

It was not until 1988 that Amec had the confidence to tap shareholders for funds to back expansion plans. An £81 million convertible rights issue helped relieve the strain on the balance sheet from funding growth internally.

Paper was used again to fund the £130 million takeover in 1989 of Matthew Hall, which gave Amec its strength in providing a full engineering and contracting package for large works; rare in the United Kingdom but commonplace elsewhere in Europe.

Yesterday's £110 million cash call of one share at 200p for each four held is expected by Amec to be used to improve the single package for clients with acquisitions, worth about £20 million to £25 million, in Europe and America. These will help win contracts with existing clients.

The cash call was well received by the market, with the shares falling from 248p to 240p, close to the theoretical ex-rights price of 238p, based on the almost 20 per cent discount at which the new shares will be offered.

Profits forecasts are largely unchanged from £55 million pre-tax and earnings unchanged at about 17p or 18p a share after allowing for the new shares. Hold the shares, take up the rights, and follow a management which knows where it is going and has timed its cash raising to compensate for the business cycle.

Harrisons & Crosfield

HARRISONS & Crosfield investors have by necessity learned the virtues of patience. The shares still await the benefits of the five-year restructuring that transformed the group from a sleepy overseas trader into a diversified conglomerate.

H&C's real problem is being in the wrong place at the wrong time. The areas it chose for diversification — building materials and chemicals — are two of the sectors most vulnerable to the recession.

The damage was on display with the 1990 figures. Operating profits from chemicals, steady at about £27 million to £28 million over each of the three previous half years,

plunged to £12.5 million in the last six months. In building supplies, H&C bought Crossley last May, at what it thought was the bottom of the market. But earnings fell further and annual profits of £6.6 million were half analysts' estimates last May.

The total pre-tax figure dropped 19 per cent to £106 million, while last year's rights issue meant earnings per share were down 29 per cent. Total dividends, none the less, are up by 8 per cent. If maintained, they provide some support in the shape of a 7.3 per cent prospective yield at yesterday's share price, up 6p at 164p. The 1990 figures were flattened by acquisitions, and H&C is not going to manage much more than £115 million this year. The shares change hands on approaching 15 times 1991 earnings, which looks hard to justify on short-term fundamentals.

Bunzl

WHAT a relief. Bunzl held its dividend at 5.9p and found no big skeletons in its cupboards. The near 17 per cent falls in pre-tax profits to £54.3 million and earnings to 7.7p per share

were as expected. Yet the removal of uncertainty and confidence in David Kendall, the new chairman, sent Bunzl shares up 14p to 96p.

The shares sell at 12.5 times 1990 earnings, not obviously cheap for a group that draws three quarters of profits from distribution, but still yield a tasty 8.1 per cent in dividend. Prospects look solid rather than exciting, which suits investors after James White's era of deal-making and unmaking. The American and European paper distributing businesses, though different, both held up well in hard times in 1990 as, more remarkably, did American building materials. Given no deterioration in markets, profits should not be lower this year, and markets are more likely to improve.

In manufacturing, the volatile cigarette filter side, which depends on marginal demand, may have another poor year, while the promised new chief executive will have some work to do on the plastics business, where profits fell a third.

Lower interest on much reduced debt and the elimination of some other central debts should further help Bunzl profits recover modestly, making the dividend even safer. The shares still look sound value.

Nissan aims to sit in own distribution driving seat



Dealership challenge: Akio Sumitomo, of Nissan

BAFFLED executives at Nissan were agast when they saw the latest advertisements for the company's new car being launched into the British market.

When the car was unveiled to the press, it was called the Nissan Sunny. When it arrived in the showrooms, it had become the Nissan Pulsar.

The change happened between the launch and after delivery from the Japanese factory to Nissan UK, the independent British distributor.

The hurried change of badge is probably insignificant in the scale of the argument raging between Nissan Motor Manufacturing, the Japanese-owned business that runs the car plant at Washington, Tyne and Wear, and Nissan UK. But it underlines the extent of the rift between the companies and the reason why Nissan is determined to cut free of Octav Botnar, the multi-millionaire who controls all Nissan sales in Britain through his network of dealers.

Nissan Motor yesterday announced it was spending £40 million on setting up its own distribution business in Britain, on a site, still to be chosen, somewhere to the northwest of the M25. The business, which will create 357 jobs, will be run by Akio Sumitomo, aged 48, a Nissan company man.

The business, called Nissan Motor (GB), will take over responsibility for distributing Nissan cars from January 1, 1992, but Mr Sumitomo's biggest task is to find dealers to replace the 380 serviced by Nissan UK as the biggest privately owned showroom network in the country.

The move is one of the most ambitious seen in the British motor industry, with Nissan hoping to create in nine months what Mr Botnar put together in more than two decades.

Nissan will not be moved from this course, simply because the Japanese cannot control Mr Botnar.

The German entrepreneur took the risk 21 years ago of importing "cheap and cheerful" Datsun saloons, now known as Nissans, as competition for the then overpowered European industry.

Mr Botnar gambled that Japanese cars, boasting reliability if not style, could beat the best of British models from British Leyland, which then had such romantic names as Triumph, MG, Austin and Rover, to set alongside competitors from the Rootes Group, such as Hillman, and Ford and Vauxhall.

The Japanese surprised even themselves with their success. At a time when British-built cars were a more familiar sight in the workshop than on the road, reliability allied to cheapness attracted buyers in droves. From selling only 1,200 cars in its first year, Nissan UK sold more than 106,000 last year, making Nissan the biggest Japanese car company in Europe. The rate of success

over the years also encouraged the company to make its £700 million investment in manufacturing at Washington in 1986.

With the plant, however, came the commitment to huge sales, at least double those in Britain, with two key cars, the Primera and a successor to the Micra small model.

Nissan became increasingly uncomfortable with the idea that Britain, which would account for a leading portion of its European activity, was controlled by an outsider.

Mr Botnar was not a man to be prodded. The launch last year of the Primera highlighted the disagreements between both sides, with Nissan UK claiming the car was as much as 30 per cent more

expensive in Britain than abroad. Within weeks, Nissan was briefing lawyers to end the exclusive distribution rights claimed by Mr Botnar.

The threat certainly did nothing to dampen Mr Botnar's combative spirit and the same row surfaced over the pricing policy of the Sunny range.

This time the argument was deepened when Mr Botnar went against plans from Nissan for a pan-European badge for the car by renaming the model the Pulsar in Britain.

Nissan Motor said yesterday: "We discussed the name last year with Nissan UK and it was decided the model range would be Sunny throughout Europe. Someone in Portugal has the rights to the name Pulsar in some European markets. Mr Botnar made his decision. We can only say that we take over distribution next year."

The two sides meet again in court in May, with Mr Botnar likely to claim compensation of up to £1 billion, but little progress is expected in the dispute, which has confused customers and dealers alike.

Customers are unable to fathom the connection between the maze of Nissan companies. Dealers are angry about the uncertainty over whether they will still have the profitable Nissan franchise after next year.

A group of 26 independent dealers claims that Nissan Motor will be "pilloried" for its pricing policies in Britain and wants assurances on its future.

It seems certain that by January, Nissan will finally control its own British sales network and that Mr Botnar will have moved on to one or more different franchises with other manufacturers.

The question is: at what cost? Nissan will either be forced into a cash settlement with Mr Botnar or into setting up its own dealer network at more than £200 million.

The cost this year may also be in loyalty from customers who do not like to be at the centre of such an embarrassing public dispute.

KEVIN EASON
Motoring Correspondent

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Dollar king abdicates

MORE than 100 well-wishers gathered at the offices of Robert Fleming last night to see off John Galvani, head of Far Eastern trading, who is retiring after a long City career. Galvani, aged 56, known as "Galvo" to his friends, was hailed as the king of the dollar premiums in the days before exchange controls were abolished in 1979. "He is probably the best convertible trader the City has seen," says a former colleague. A connoisseur of fine cigars, Galvani ran Guinness Mahon's dealing room before joining Kidder Peabody in the early Seventies to run the dollar premium book. He joined Flemings in 1977, switching from currencies to Japanese convertible bonds two years later, and went on to become a main board director. A keen race-horse owner, Galvani seems destined to spend more time than ever following the racing circuit. Hopefully, he will have a tip or two for his pinstriped former colleagues.

Luck of the draw

TALK in City watering holes about John Holmes and Peter Quinnen's new stockbroking venture, due to be launched in September, has centred on the



remarkable timing of the duo. Holmes, previously head of Morgan Grenfell Securities and then head of equity sales at Morgan Stanley, before leaving in December to work on the business plan for this venture, is aware that he is generally perceived to be getting in when sentiment within the Square Mile is more optimistic than it has been for several years. "I think it's always best to start up at the bottom of the cycle," he says. "I don't think it's going to be like the bull phase of the Eighties, you only see those once or twice a century," he says. "You will always get good years and bad years. The most difficult thing facing our industry now is essentially a cost problem. The industry has not made money since Big Bang."

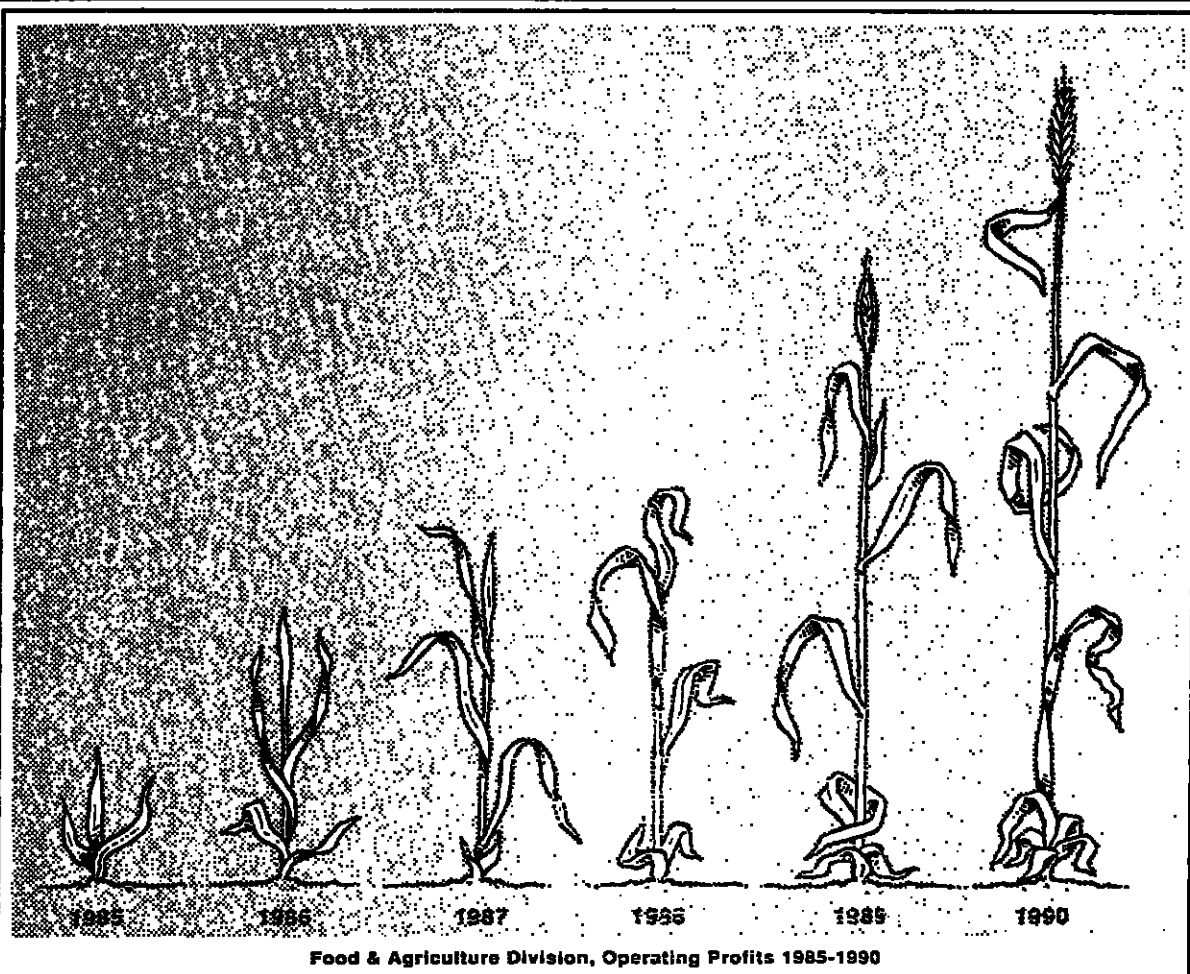
Clearly, Holmes must believe that all that is about to change.

CHRISTIE'S is closing its City office in Gresham Street today, thus ending a five-year presence in the Square Mile. Stockbrokers and bankers hoping to collect their auction catalogues will have to visit the company's King Street headquarters, which will be kept open later on Tuesday evenings to cater for City customers.

Guiding light

THREE years ago, Sir Desmond Limerick, a prominent Ulster industrialist, led an unsuccessful attempt by Antrim Power to build a privately owned power station in Ulster. Now he has been chosen to oversee the privatisation of Northern Ireland Electricity. Four power stations will be sold to outside bidders and the electricity grid will be operated by a newly floated public company, in what will be the fourth phase in the sale of the United Kingdom's power industry. Dr Roelof Schierbeek, the present chairman, has resigned in protest at the split. Limerick, a former chairman of the NI Industrial Development Board, plans to stay on at the helm of the newly floated company, which will run the provincial grid from November next year. He is

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1990 Financial Highlights

Turnover	£1,793m
Profits before tax	£106.1m
Earnings per share	11.6p
Recommended dividend	9.0p

Harrisons & Crosfield plc Investing for the future

Harrisons & Crosfield plc 20 St. Dunstan's Hill London EC3R 8LQ

By Our City Staff

By JONATHAN FRYN

APV, the world's largest manufacturer of food processing equipment, has maintained its dividend, as the company forecast last November.

At that time, APV gave warning that heavy restructuring costs would adversely affect the 1990 results.

The final and total dividends are held at 3.4p and 3.4p, respectively, in spite of a 34 per cent slide in pre-tax profits from £60.6 million to £40.2 million. Dividend cover, however, fell from 2.6 times to 1.7 times, below the company's long-term target of a twice-covered payout.

Neil French, the finance director, said the dividend had been maintained because "we recognise shareholders like their dividend income and because our confidence in the future is undiminished".

The 1990 accounts include provisions of £9.2 million, of which £7.5 million was taken above the line to cover redundancy and re-organisation costs. That £1.7 million taken as an extraordinary item was related to integration of acquisitions.

Another £10.3 million of re-organisation costs do not appear in the 1990 accounts

By JONATHAN PRYNN

APV, the world's largest manufacturer of food processing equipment, has maintained its dividend, as the company forecast last November.

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as they are covered by provisions made in 1989. Dr French said the possibility existed of further small restructuring costs in 1991.

He added that conflicting signals from the company's difficult 1990 forecast whether further reductions in the cost base would be needed this year.

Dr French said that while the order book at January 1 was 17 per cent below that of 1990, the order intake for the first two months of the year

was "broadly in line" with the same order period last year.

British and American markets, which account for about 40 per cent of sales, were still depressed, he said, but there was growth in continental Europe. Sir Peter Cazalet, chairman, said: "Overall, economic conditions in 1990 were not conducive to major capital investment by many of the group's principal customers."

Gearing was down to 40.5 per cent, though the figure would have been 48.5 per cent without the effect of a 1990 property revaluation. The interest charge of £8 million was covered six times, compared with £5 million of interest covered 11.8 times in 1989.

Dr French said capital expenditure had been a record of £42 million in 1990, against £28.5 million before. The increase was due to the development of a £30 million food equipment factory in Peterborough. Capital expenditure is expected to fall to about £30 million.

Turnovers rose 10 per cent to £90 million. If property profits, pension accounting credits and other non-trading factors are stripped out, turnover rose 13 per cent and underlying operating profits by 20 per cent.

By WOLFGANG MÜNCHAU
EUROPEAN BUSINESS
CORRESPONDENT

The boom in the German economy led to a strong increase in profits at Deutsche Bank, Europe's largest quoted bank, last year.

Operating profits rose from DM4.67 billion to DM5.13 billion, and the bank's balance sheet grew to DM40.8 billion, its highest ever.

The results beat market expectations despite a strong rise in expenditure, particularly on recruitment, for the bank's new branch network in eastern Germany.

The downturn in world stock markets meant that the bank suffered a 28 per cent fall in trading profits to DM600 million. Net interest income was up from DM4.6 billion to DM9.1 billion, partly because of increased business and a stabilisation of interest margins.

Income on commission was up 29 per cent to DM3.3 billion, which includes the DM400 million contribution by Morgan Grenfell, the London merchant bank it took over in 1989.

Eastern German activity was largely responsible for a 25 per cent rise in gross operating expenses to DM8.5 billion.

BY MARTIN WALLER

UNITED Newspapers, publisher of the *Daily Express*, *Sunday Express* and *Daily Star*, saw net tax profits fall from £111.2 million to £95.7 million, a "disappointing but not unreasonable performance," according to Lord Stevens of Ludgate, the chairman.

Much of the fall was the result of higher interest charges, with net payments up by £11.3 million to £27.1 million after heavy spending on the group's newspaper titles. There was a £3.8 million fall to £119.9 million in trading profits. Earnings per share were 17 per cent lower at 31.7p.

The group is maintaining the total dividend at 21p, with an unchanged 13.5p final. Lord Stevens had given warning at the half-way stage that lower advertising revenue would have an increasing effect on second-half profits.

He said: "I do not foresee any sustained increase in business activity until well into the second half of 1991. While we wait for recovery, we are taking action to reduce costs and build our strength."

Advertising stayed at last year's level, enabling the national newspapers' trading profits to remain steady. The daily titles raised circulations in the second half but the *Sunday Express* lost sales "substantially". Regional newspapers and advertising periodicals were hit by the sharp reduction in motors, recruitment and property classified advertising but managed record profits. The worst damage came in business magazines, now merged with exhibitions. The combined division saw a 23 per cent trading profits fall.

JOHNSON Matthey, the precious metal dealer, has lost a Court of Appeal bid to establish that it is not liable to pay corporation tax on the £50 million paid as part of the package to rescue Johnson Matthey Bankers Ltd (JMB), its former subsidiary, in 1984.

In the rescue package, the Bank of England acquired JMB's shares for £1 on condition that the parent company injected £50 million.

Johnson Matthey contended the payment was of "revenue nature", but Lord Justice Fox, McCowan and Beldam upheld the Inland Revenue's contention that the payment was of "a capital nature" and liable to tax.

PROFITS at Swire Pacific, the Hong Kong trading house, fell 20.5 per cent last year, mainly because of the impact of the Gulf War on Cathay Pacific Airways, which is 51.9 per cent owned by Swire, and poorer performance by the property side.

Swire made net profits of HK\$2.45 billion (£180.2 million), down from HK\$3.0 billion for 1989.

David Gledhill, the managing director, said the outlook for the group beyond 1991 was encouraging but there was uncertainty over Cathay prospects. Cathay this year reported a decline in 1990 net profits to HK\$2.99 billion from HK\$3.32 billion in 1989.

	Cals					Pm				
	Stn	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Stn	May	Jun	Jul	
Adm Lines	500	30	43	58	8	22	27			
(9513)	500	7	18	34	53	92	56			
ASDA	120	4	16	8	37	91	94			
(9125)	120	4	16	8	37	91	94			
Ba	1000	8	14	5%	9	16	17	19		
(9429)	1000	8	14	5%	9	16	17	19		
Ba	1100	2	7	12	17	122	123	128		
(9419)	1100	2	7	12	17	122	123	128		
Ba	300	67	72	74	1	8	11	11		
(9419)	300	67	72	74	1	8	11	11		
Ba	340	14	24	35	9	19	21	21		
(9419)	340	14	24	35	9	19	21	21		
Ba	360	20	26	24	4	8	14	13		
(9419)	360	20	26	24	4	8	14	13		
Ba	180	4	9	13	14	23	25	25		
(9419)	180	4	9	13	14	23	25	25		
Ba	300	41	46	53	6	12	17	17		
(9419)	300	41	46	53	6	12	17	17		
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Ba	180	4	9	13	14	23	25	25		
(9419)	180	4	9	13	14	23	25	25		
Ba	300	41	46	53	6	12	17	17		
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Ba	360	20	26	24	4	8	14	13		
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Ba	180	4	9	13	14	23	25	25		
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Ba	300	41	46	53	6	12	17	17		
(9419)	300	41	46	53	6	12	17	17		
Ba	360	20	26	24	4	8	14	13		
(9419)	360	20	26	24	4	8	14	13		
Ba	180	4	9	13	14	23	25	25		
(9419)	180	4	9	13	14	23	25	25		
Ba	300	41	46	53	6	12	17	17		
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Ba	360	20	26	24	4	8	14	13		
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Ba	300	41	46	53	6	12	17	17		
(9419)	300	41	46	53	6	12	17	17		
Ba	360	20	26	24	4	8	1			

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13

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1991					1991						
High	Low	Company	High	Low	Company	High	Low	Company	High	Low	Company
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20.00	18.00	...	20.00	18.00	...	20.00	18.00	...	20.00	18.00	...
19.00	17.00	...	19.00	17.00	...	19.00	17.00	...	19.00	17.00	...
18.00	16.00	...	18.00	16.00	...	18.00	16.00	...	18.00	16.00	...
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10.00	8.00	...	10.00	8.00	...	10.00	8.00	...	10.00	8.00	...
9.00	7.00	...	9.00	7.00	...	9.00	7.00	...	9.00	7.00	...
8.00	6.00	...	8.00	6.00	...	8.00	6.00	...	8.00	6.00	...
7.00	5.00	...	7.00	5.00	...	7.00	5.00	...	7.00	5.00	...
6.00	4.00	...	6.00	4.00	...	6.00	4.00	...	6.00	4.00	...
5.00	3.00	...	5.00	3.00	...	5.00	3.00	...	5.00	3.00	...
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Oct	720.730	Nov	308.430	Jan	108.8-98.0	E	
Nov	720.730	Dec	308.430	Feb	108.8-98.0	F	
Dec	720.730	Jan	308.430	Mar	108.8-98.0	G	
Jan	720.730	Feb	308.430	Apr	108.8-98.0	H	
Feb	720.730	Mar	308.430	May	108.8-98.0	I	
Mar	720.730	Apr	308.430	Jun	108.8-98.0	J	
Apr	720.730	May	308.430	Jul	108.8-98.0	K	
May	720.730	Jun	308.430	Aug	108.8-98.0	L	
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Falling demand: Mirafioris roll through the production line at the factory in Turin, but the big car maker Fiat is generally reducing production as German rivals make inroads

On the slow road to recovery

Even as the dark clouds of war were slowly clearing from the skies of the Middle East and from the economic prospects of most of the rest of the world, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, the governor of the Bank of Italy, warned the nation that great care and rigorous measures were needed to limit the effects of recession and maintain even minimum economic growth.

In its latest report, the bank forecasts a growth in gross national product (GNP) of less than 2 per cent. The bank again warns of the dangers of inflation creeping towards 7 per cent, and of the weight of an accumulated public debt, which is now greater than a full year's GNP, and which government action has failed to reduce.

Although some analysts forecast growth of only 1.2 per cent in 1991, the Italian economy has suffered less than was at first feared from the temporary rise of oil prices and the other negative effects of the Gulf confrontation on trade, consumption and industrial production.

The situation in Italy certainly appears more buoyant than that in Britain. Recession has, however, hit the industrial sector, and even if the sharp drop in production that took place in the second half of 1990 seems to be levelling off, sectors that traditionally and in terms of volume

of production are mainstays of the Italian economy are in difficulties. Two prime examples are textiles, in which Italy produced 2.3 per cent less in 1990 than it did in 1989, and mechanical engineering, including electronics, car production, machine tools and aviation, in which production fell by 1.1 per cent. Most of the fall came in the second half of 1990, and while it coincided with the events in the Gulf, the signs were clear before the invasion of Kuwait.

What has attracted a lot of attention, and possibly caused pessimism beyond that justified by the statistics, is the fact that two of the best-known companies in Italian industry have admitted that the months and years to come could be difficult. The Fiat Group, of which about half is car production, is reducing its output as demand falls. The group which controls Fiat, Lancia and Alfa Romeo, has seen its share of the Italian market shrink from 60 per cent a few years ago to 52.8 per cent in 1990. The competition has not been Japanese, but mainly German, a sign perhaps that in a market that for the past few years has grown in terms of the quality and price of

each vehicle rather than in the number of vehicles sold, Fiat has not matched the German products in quality and durability.

This has been partly compensated for by a slight increase in exports, but for the first time in many years Fiat's profits fell last year, and at the last shareholders' meeting, Gianni Agnelli, Fiat's chairman, admitted that a difficult period was starting.

Olivetti, another Italian name known all over the world, is trying to lay off almost 7,000 employees, half in its Italian plants and the rest in Olivetti enterprises around the world. This will cut its total workforce from 54,000 to 47,000. According to Olivetti, this is necessary to reduce costs and face increasing competition in the world's computer market.

Other sectors of Italian industry, such as chemicals and ceramics, have continued to grow, but the unprecedented boom that began in the early Eighties is definitely at the end of its cycle. As Signor Agnelli eloquently put it recently, "La festa è finita" - the party is over.

For medium and small industries, those that pulled Italy through the disastrous Seventies, the past few

years have not been particularly brilliant. The industries are still a fundamentally healthy backbone of the economy, but in the late Eighties their performance was overshadowed by that of the big companies. Giuseppe Rosa, of the research department of Confindustria, the national federation of industrialists, believes that smaller companies are finding it difficult to increase their production efficiency.

He warns: "Although they carried the economy through the late Seventies and early Eighties, when big industry was restructuring, today they are having difficulty in obtaining venture capital and in internationalising their activity."

Italian private industry seems ready for the single European market and for global competition, but with certain reservations.

Giulio De Capraris, a senior Confindustria analyst, says: "Nothing is wrong with Italian industry itself. But there are factors in the Italian system as a whole that are reducing international competitiveness: high inflation, for instance, and costly but inefficient services

and infrastructure. The problems are social and political, not industrial."

According to Confindustria figures, Italy is steadily losing competitiveness to other European countries. Recently, Sergio Pininfarina, the Confindustria president, asked the government for immediate support for industry. "This is not a request for help," he told the government, "but for essential corrective measures that other European countries such as France and Great Britain are already putting into practice." Signor Pininfarina was asking for immediate support for investments and for export.

Beyond an understandable amount of moans, groans and dire warnings, however, from both economists and industrialists, the overall picture looks relatively good. Italian industry has, after all, always given proof of remarkable adaptability; it was only in the Seventies, a decade of social, political and labour problems, that the future looked grim. It soon snapped out of that.

Italy was the first country to send a commercial mission to Kuwait after the war. Such international aggressiveness, along with a trend towards economic liberalism and Italy's undiminished expertise, make the prospects for industry, large and small, seem good.

Industry nurses its young to maturity

A business centre in Trieste fosters the growth of innovative new companies

ONE of the seed-beds for innovative ideas for Italian industry is the Business Innovation Centre in Trieste, known as BIC-Trieste. "We are really the only fully operational business innovation centre in Italy," says Francesco Zaccagna, the managing director, and he claims several success stories in its two years of existence.

Talent, for example, a company set up by a former Fiat group researcher and a biotechnology academic, has patented a process to extract DNA automatically from bacteria and human cells in 15 minutes, instead of the usual manual preparation which takes five hours. Marketing arrangements have been made with an internationally known company.

Elcon, formed by an unemployed electronics technician and a professional engineer, is supplying electronic safety devices which control braking and acceleration for 236 buses ordered from an Italian vehicle manufacturer for Seattle, in the United States.

Another Elcon device, which saves 20 to 30 per cent of electricity consumption in batteries, is being fitted in small electric vehicles being sold to Switzerland.

Vectopharma, which will soon move outside Trieste to a plant being built for commercial production, has developed techniques to improve the human body's acceptance of poorly absorbed medicines. Other companies that already have outlets for their products are Micro M, which makes electronic-control instruments and optical-fibre transmission systems, and Sifra Est, which makes high-purity plastic materials for intravenous therapy.

BIC-Trieste's owners are Promozione e Sviluppo Imprenditoriale (SPI), the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region, and smaller shareholders such as

the Trieste chamber of commerce. BIC-Trieste evaluates a budding entrepreneur's project and, if it passes, acts as a wet nurse, offering premises and services, mobilising venture capital, and providing administrative support for feasibility and marketing studies.

After three years, it reckons, a company should be able to leave and make its way in the world. Currently 20 firms employing 170 people are being mothered.

Co-operation is close with Area di Ricerca, a science park in the hills behind Trieste, which features what is probably Italy's biggest concentration of applied and pure research, including work on the construction of a synchrotron "light machine". The park, which is a centre for biotechnology and theoretical physics, is being expanded to become multi-disciplinary.

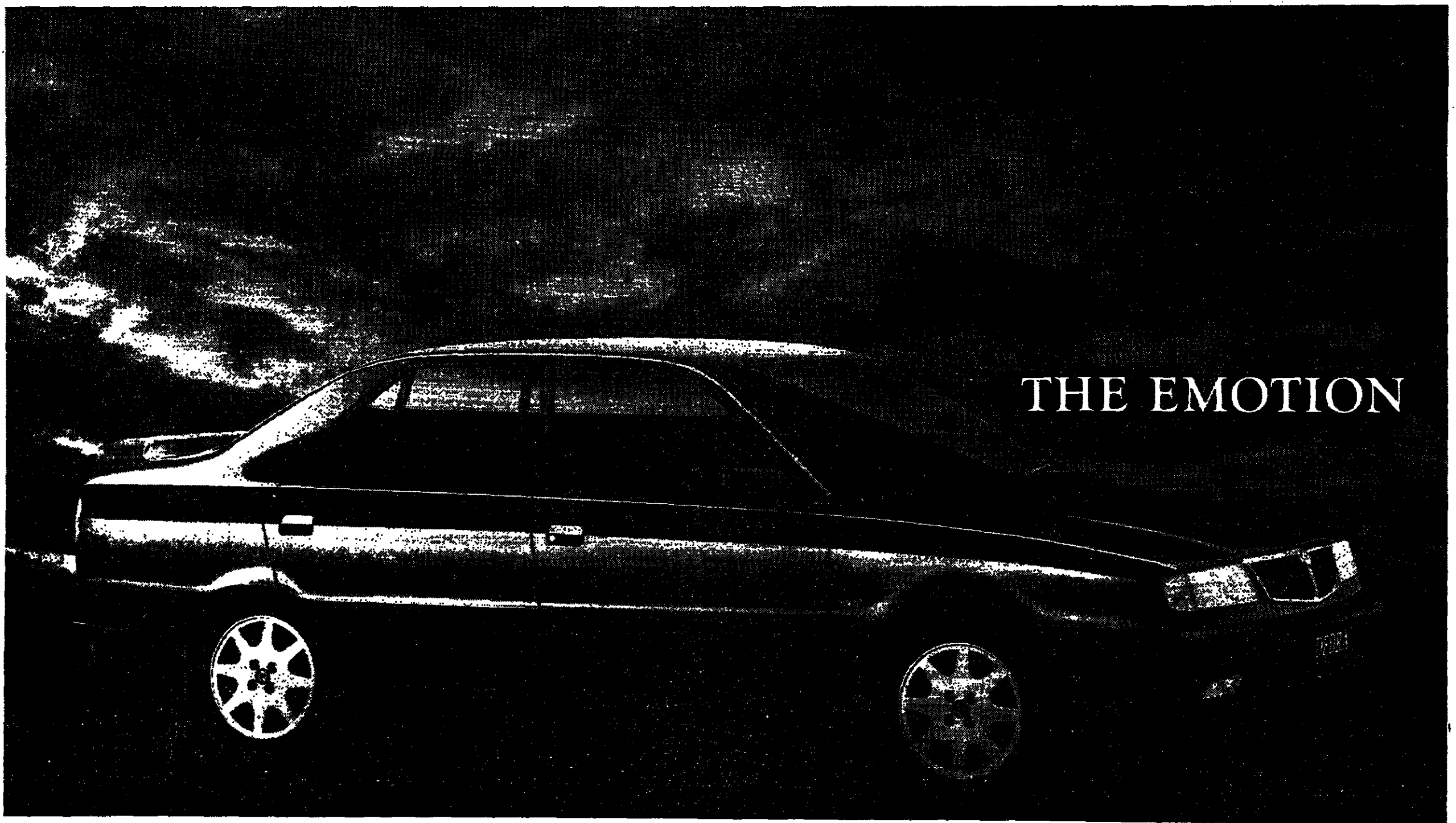
BIC-Trieste was planned with an eye towards eastern Europe even before the collapse of communism.

Since then, interest has quickened, and to promote business innovation there SEED (Services for Eastern European Development) was established in February by BIC-Trieste.

Things are moving most quickly with Hungary. The authorities at Pecs, Signor Zaccagna says, have made available land for an Italian-serviced BIC. BIC-Trieste is also fathering a BIC at Koper in Slovenia.

Agreements have been signed with the Soviet Union for a high-technology BIC at Leningrad, and for restructuring a furniture and timber complex at Vyborg. Approaches have come from Czechoslovakia and Poland. "There has certainly been no shortage of proposals," Signor Zaccagna says.

JOHN EARLE



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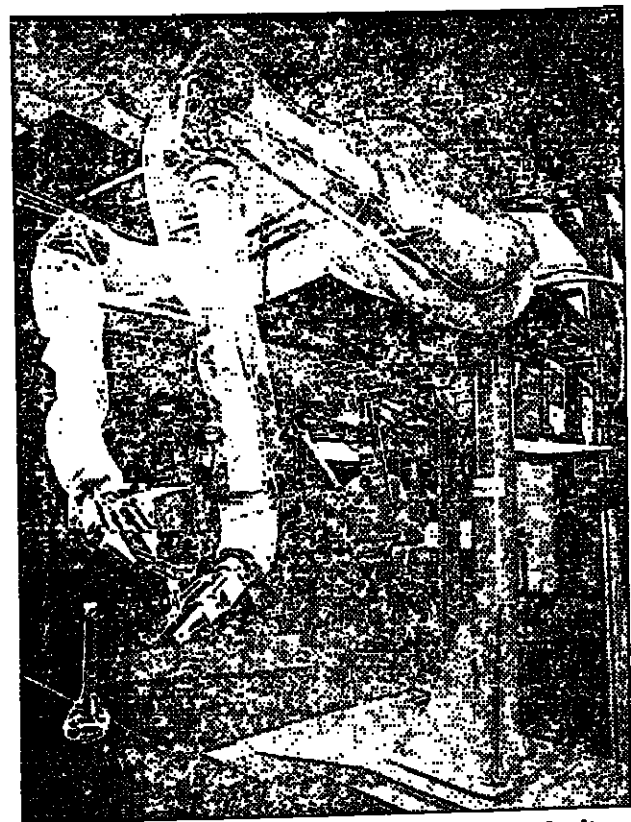
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Hands-on robot at Enea, the energy-research authority

Robot tools lead the export march

TOOL-MAKING

The machine tool industry helped to propel the Italian economy, which was devastated after the second world war, into fourth or fifth place in the industrialised world. In its 1989 annual report, Ucinu, the Association of Machine Tool, Robot and Automation Manufacturers, wrote that since 1983 expansion has increased by an average of more than 20 per cent a year.

Last year, however, total orders fell by an estimated 17.2 per cent, and domestic orders were 32.7 per cent down. But exports rose slightly by 3.6 per cent; sales to Germany increased by 72 per cent to overtake those to France (up 16 per cent), making Germany the most important market.

About half of Italian output is exported, and Italy rates fourth among exporting countries, behind Germany, Japan and Switzerland.

Apart from big names such as Comau (the Fiat group) and Mandelli, most of manufacturing is made up of small private firms. The average company is small, with 70 employees, compared with 240 in Germany. There are

A map of Italy's industrial areas mirrors the gradual change that has taken place in the country's economic fortunes since the second world war. Modern industrial activity began after the war, and, by the mid-Fifties, had risen to fever pitch in the northern triangle of Milan, Turin and Genoa, while the central Po Valley area became the country's bread and cheese basket, worked by efficient agricultural and agro-industrial co-operatives.

The southern regions remained for the most part agricultural backwaters, with small, piecemeal farms and, later, attempts at industrial development.

Today, the south is no longer the poverty-stricken area it once was, but highly developed industry is still a northern prerogative. Industrialisation is spreading eastwards to the highly active Veneto region. There, a host of small but successful specialist industries include Benetton clothes, Lux Ottica spectacles and lenses, and international wineries and food-processing factories. Some long-established industrial areas are, however, undergoing radical changes influenced by factors, such as competitive labour costs from third-world manufacturers, and the drop in demand for many of Italy's best manufactured products.

The northern province of Biella, for instance, has worked textiles, mainly wool products, since the 16th century. The industry has now diversified into textile machinery, much of which is made for export to the same developing countries, such as South Korea, China and Turkey, that form the competition.

Another leading sector is the gold and jewellery business, which ranks third in Italy's list of commercial income-earning interests. Last year 6,800 workers grouped across the northern regions of Piedmont, the Veneto and central Tuscany, in the towns of Valenza Po, Vicenza and Arezzo, transformed more than 300 tons of gold into jewellery.

Heavy industry is probably the main post-war industrial development, particularly in Lombardy and Piedmont in the northwest. Val Trompia, near Brescia, in Lombardy, has long been a centre for

steel-making and steel products, and particularly for arms (Beretta pistols are made there) and machine tools.

The area around Turin is probably the best-known for motor vehicle and car-component manufacturing, mostly dependent on, or ancillary to, Fiat. During the past 20 years, Olivetti, the other Piedmontese industrial giant, has streamlined and developed the industrial area of northwest Italy. Together, Olivetti and Fiat have become two of the leading powers of industrial Europe with, among other capacities, the ability to help develop some of Italy's less industrially endowed regions.

Italy's south, beginning as far north as Lazio, around Rome, became in the post-war years, and is still, an area where investment is encouraged, and needed. Early development, helped by the now-defunct Cassa per il Mezzogiorno, helped populate towns such as Pomezia on the southern outskirts of Rome, with pharmaceutical, computer-component and electronic factories. More foreigners as well as Italians were encouraged with grants and tax relief, with the result that once-deserted suburban areas of Rome are now home to internationally known companies. At the same time, years of haphazard and misplaced financing have created in the south what are known as "cathedrals in the desert" — the kind of unfinished, drop-out big industrial projects that never got off the ground, such as the large, now-abandoned steel works and port in the Calabrian region of Gioia Tauro.

Italy's industrial leaders are now taking a long hard look, however, at further investment in the south. Fiat factories near Cassino, just north of Naples, and the newly acquired Alfa Romeo factory of Pomigliano D'Arco, near Naples, produce a large percentage of Fiat cars. Fiat plans two new factories. One in Melfi, in the poorer region of Basilicata, will employ 7,000 workers and is expected to produce 1,800 vehicles a day by 1994; another in Avellino, east of Naples, will produce 3,600 vehicles a day, employing 1,300 workers. These two plants will ensure that 50 per cent of Fiat's car production will be carried out by

'The regions have now gained control of their own financial future'

The south is now in fashion

A cottage industry earning £173 million a year making casual clothes has become a symbol of southern enterprise. Janet Stobart reports



Money spinner: Benetton clothing is Veneto's success story

recently described the area as presenting "a great opportunity for industrial entrepreneurs... lower labour costs, incentives, good workforce".

Industrial areas already operate with some success in the south. In the mountainous region of the Abruzzi, a conglomeration of small cottage industries has formed into a profitable consortium to make fashion clothes and leather goods.

The Val Vibrata has become almost a symbol of southern enterprise, exemplified by 179 casual clothes and sportswear factories producing an annual turnover of about £173 million.

Salvatore Caserio, the director of Svinmez, the government-sponsored research centre for the development of the south, believes the area's future lies in bigger, more central government-controlled projects. He says that since the Seventies, as

Italian regions have been given control of their own financial future, political patronage has grown, and this has led to an emphasis on immediate local needs and ambitions. He believes that more far-sighted projects, such as hydro-electric power and irrigation, which cross regional frontiers, are needed.

Steel suffers metal fatigue

STEEL WORKS

The steel industry has been a bogeyman of the economy for many years, a recurring industrial nightmare that has refused to end, even in the most positive periods of Italy's recent economic history.

The nightmare has weighed particularly on the public sector, which accounts for almost half of the country's total steel production. All too often, plants were built to create jobs in depressed areas.

In the late Eighties, it looked as if things were improving as some of the main plants were restructured and demand grew. But the figures for 1990 were worse than those for 1989, and the traditional gloom, a gloom shared by most of Europe, has settled once more on Italy's problem industry.

World steel prices have fallen by as much as 30 per cent for certain products, as a general industrial recession has decreased demand. The slump in production of cars and kitchen appliances has hit the steel industry hard, as has the slowdown in building.

This has been compounded by increasingly aggressive competition from steel-makers in Brazil, Turkey and some eastern European countries, which can sell the lower-quality steel products cheaper than their European Community counterparts.

The Italian steel industry is divided between Ilva, the



Big cogs in the steel chain: machine tools from a Danelli factory in northern Italy

state-controlled company, which produces just under half of Italy's steel products, and about 250 private steel-makers. Last year Ilva made about 11 million tons of steel, while big private mills, such as those of Riva, Falck, Lucchini and Alta Acciai, accounted for most of the rest.

Total steel production in 1990 was 25.49 million tons, slightly more than in 1989. But by the end of 1990, and in early 1991, the drop in both prices and demand was very apparent. That is now hitting the public and private mills.

A steel industry analyst says: "We cannot see any light at the end of the tunnel. We can only hope that in the second half of the year there will be a recovery in industry as a whole, and that this will pull us out of the slump."

Already both state and private steel mills have cut back production by about 10 per cent. Ilva, in agreement with British Steel, Usinor Sacilor of France and Thyssen of Germany, has cut back production of coils, one of the basic steel products, by 10 per cent in the hope that this will

support prices. Some private mills have suspended production for a few weeks.

At the same time, there seem to be no clear plans to improve the situation, and the general trend is towards cutting costs and retrenching rather than embarking on new initiatives.

"Our only hope is to concentrate on high-quality steel products," the industry analyst says, "and on productive processes that require the least investment and costs."

PAUL BOMPARD

Motor giant rides the bumps

Giovanni Agnelli, the chairman of Fiat, Italy's biggest private company, celebrated his seventieth birthday this month, an age at which many think of retirement. But after 25 years at the helm, the *avvocato*, as he is known — although he has never practised law — shows no signs of giving up running a company under family control since its foundation in 1899 (John Earle writes).

His son, Edoardo, has not been groomed as crown prince. Cesare Romiti, the chief executive and main architect of progress in recent years, has been admitted to the limited family partnership controlling the group, but he has no blood ties and is aged 69. The chairmanship will

probably remain in the family, passing to Signor Agnelli's brother, the current vice-chairman, Umberto, who is his junior by 13 years.

A more immediate issue is the recession. Signor Agnelli recently wrote of "drastic" restructuring measures. Last year broke a long run of unbroken successes. Revenues from industrial production, in a group employing 303,500 people worldwide, fell to 48,900 billion lire (about £22.4 billion) from 50,349 billion lire in 1989.

Sales of motor cars, the core business, fell by 6.7 per cent to 2,131,300. Fiat is virtually the sole Italian manufacturer, controlling Alfa Romeo,

Lancia and Ferrari. But its share of the Italian market, once two-thirds, has fallen to 52.8 per cent.

The company's strength, however, has always been diversification. Besides cars, it has subsidiaries for commercial vehicles (Iveco), farm and construction equipment (Fiatgotech), metal products (Telsid), components (Magneti Marelli, Gilardini), machine tools (Comau), civil engineering (Fiatimpianti), railway equipment (Fiat Ferroviaria), aviation (Fiatavia), telecommunications (Telettra), publishing (including *La Stampa*), financial services (including Toro insurance) and retailing (la Rinascente). Saia-BPD, itself a group within the group, covers defence, space fibres, chemicals and biotechnology.

The leadership has a reputation of not always being easy to work with. Carlo de Benedetti of Olivetti stayed just three months as an executive. On the company level, links with Citroën and Alis Chalmers failed, as did proposed ties with Ford and Chrysler, although a farm and plant equipment company was bought from the former.

A series of steps has been taken, among them a strategic alliance in telecommunications, components, railway equipment and research with France's Alcatel Alsthom. Last year, Fiat bought Enasas Pegaso, a Spanish commercial-vehicle maker, and made agreements with Westinghouse and Mitsubishi in gas turbines and with Toyota in automotive parts.



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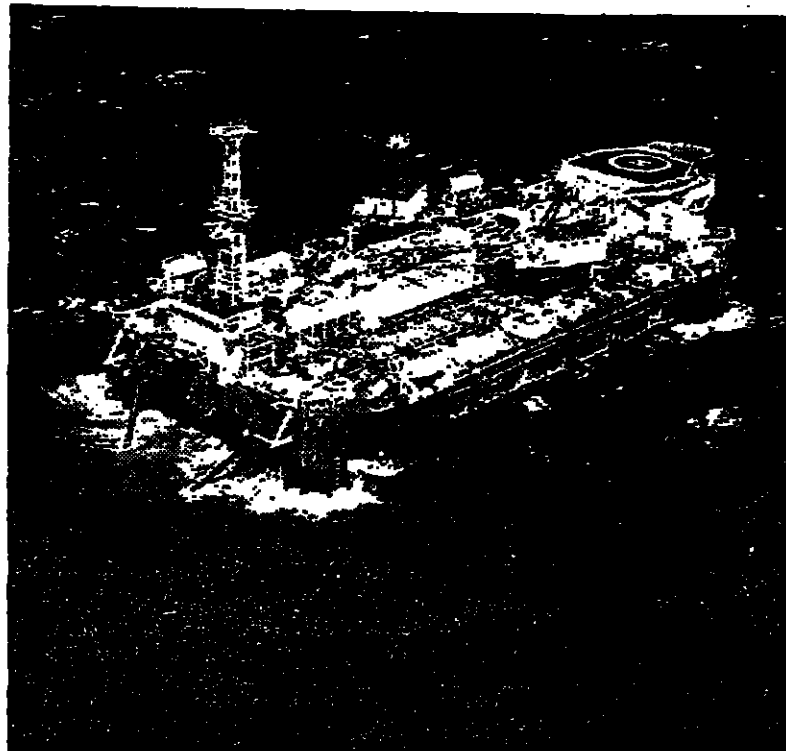
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The fleet is centred on two semi-submersible pipelay barges, the Castoro Sei and the Semac 1. These are amongst the most efficient pipelay barges in the world, the Semac 1 regularly breaking pipelay production records. The vessels are capable of operating in virtually all North Sea weather conditions, which are amongst the worst encountered in the world. They are also capable of laying pipe in water depths down to 915 m. (3000 feet) or more, depending on pipeline characteristics. The Castoro Sei holds the record for the world's deepest pipelay, the 600 metres (2000 feet) deep crossing of the Mediterranean.

Projects in Hand

EMC's prospects are excellent. The company has a full order book for 1991, Statoil's massive Zeepipe project taking pride of place. The 1992 order book is also well filled but not yet full.

Besides the Zeepipe contract, work will also be carried out on the Bruce Development for Total/BP, as well as on BP Exploration's Amethyst development and on the re-development of the Piper field for Occidental.

Installation of Zeepipe will be carried out over two seasons using the semi-submersible laybarges, Castoro Sei and Semac 1. The project involves the installation of over 800 kms of heavy wall 40" pipe linking the Norwegian Sleipner field (located on the same latitude as the Northern tip of Scotland) to the Belgium port of Zeebrugge. Sleipner will also be linked by a 40 kms 30" line to Statpipe at the 16/11s riser platform, and to Norway at Karsto (just north of Stavanger) by a 230 kms 20" line crossing the Norwegian trench.

The southern 230 kms of 40" line will be installed this year and represents a considerable challenge due to the presence of sand waves, some up to 8m. high, and shipping channels in a strongly tidal part of the North Sea. We estimate that in the next few months, on Zeepipe alone, over 60 vessels will be operating at the same time under EMC's direction.

As well as starting Statoil's Zeepipe, work will also commence on Total's 155 mile long, 24" Bruce export line, and on the associated 32" line. A major portion of the 24" line will be installed this year, the balance being completed in 1992.

On Britoil's Amethyst project, EMC will lay two lines, a 10" and a 12" with a 3" line piggy-backed on top of each of them. Both lines will be trenching into the very hard soils of the area using the Bar 331, and will also be tied-in to the preinstalled risers.

As part of Occidental's Piper re-development, EMC is scheduled to install a 33 kms 30" oil line from Piper Bravo to the 30" Claymore spur. Also to be installed will be a 1.4 kms 16" gas line from Piper Bravo to the old 16" Piper Alpha to Claymore line.

In 1992, the Zeepipe and Bruce pipelines will be completed. Of particular note will be the crossing of the Norwegian trench in around 300 m. (1000 ft.) of water for Zeepipe. This will be a technically demanding operation involving parallel lay with the Statpipe line for over 100 kms., as well as the negotiation of seabed pockmarks. The shore approach at Karsto will use a subsea entrance to the shore tunnel in 58 m. (190 ft.) of water.

THE TIFFANY PLATFORM

AGIP U.K. has awarded a contract for the design and fabrication, offshore installation and commissioning of an oil and gas production platform - the Tiffany platform - to the Tiffany Contractors consortium constituted by MATTHEW HALL, PRESS OFFSHORE Ltd. (both belonging to the AMEC Group) and SAIPEM U.K.

The contract

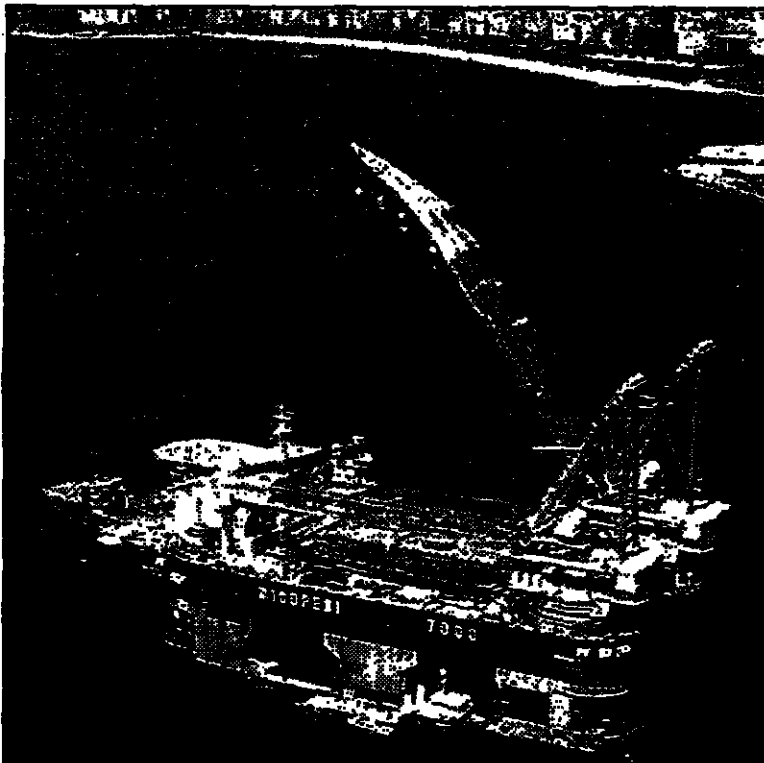
The contract was awarded in July, 1990 and it should be over in three years. Tiffany Contractors is a joint venture operation that will draw on Europe's strongest skills in the industry, maintaining and creating jobs for up to 3,300.

The platform facilities are designed to meet the following basic statement of Requirements:
Oil Production 105,000 BPD
Gas Production 115 MMSCFD
Water Injection 125,000 BPD

The Tiffany Contractors consortium

The work will be carried out by the Tiffany Contractors consortium in performing the management, engineering, procurement, fabrication, onshore commissioning, load out, seafastening transportation, installation and offshore hook-up and commissioning (E.P.I.C.) of the jacket, piles, module support frame, topside modules comprising process, utilities, accommodation, drilling modules and flare together with all appurtenances.

The basic principle of the E.P.I.C. concept of the contract is that contractor receives the basic design, and after reviews confirms that this basic design is acceptable in terms of constructability and operability; carries out all necessary engineering, design development and finalisation required and constructs and installs the components of the platform and carries out all hook-up and commissioning required to obtain an unqualified



MICOPERI 7000 - Semi-submersible Crane Vessel
Micoperi 7000 is the flagship of the Micoperi Group's fleet, a specialized fleet, dedicated to transport and installation activities. Two twin 7000 tons fully revolving cranes, and one crawler crane, 200 tons lifting capacity, are available on board.

Certificate of Fitness to Produce under the Minerals Working Act 1991. Thereafter to provide assistance to operator during production start-up.

The T-Block

The Tiffany platform belongs to the T-Block complex to which also belong the Thelma and Toni sectors that will be developed in the next years.

MATTHEW HALL and PRESS OFFSHORE Ltd. provide the engineering and fabrication of the accommodation, process and utilities modules.

SAIPEM U.K. takes responsibility for:

- the engineering and fabrication of the jacket, module support frame and drilling modules
- the transport and offshore installation of the jackets, modules and flare
- the participation in j.v. with PRESS OFFSHORE Ltd. to the onshore and offshore hook-up and commissioning.

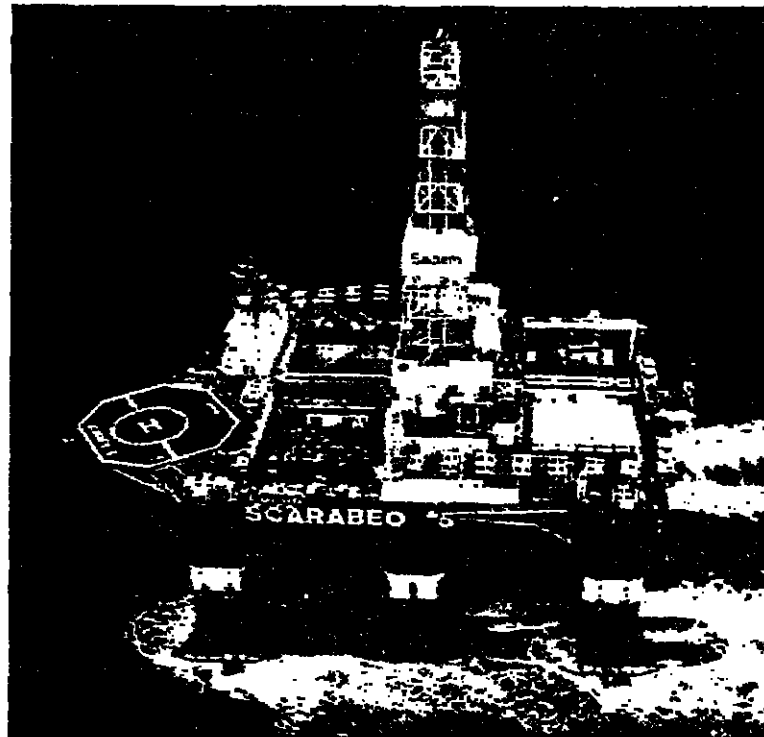
Main features of the platform are given by an eight legged jacket weighing approximately 17,500 tons at launch to be installed on a pre drilled template in a water depth of approximately 126 metres. The platform layout is designed for a total number of 16 conductors each 30" diameter.

The offshore installation works including the docking of the jacket over a pre-drilling template will be carried out by the SSCV Micoperi 7000, the only vessel that can lift such heavy modules.

The Tiffany will be the first platform engineered and fabricated taking into consideration the Formal Safety Assessment, which is a system of safety assurance, documented and auditable to ensure that any recommendation resulting from the Assessment shall be incorporated prior to a design, construction or operational activity starting.

DRILLING IN THE NORWEGIAN SEAS

Saipem, a company within Eni Group, has been awarded an important contract for drilling activities in the North Sea, to develop the "Snorre Field" Norwegian offshore oil-field. Work will be carried out over two years. The contract has been awarded by Saga Petroleum A/S, a major Norwegian oil-company.



SCARABEO 5 - Semi-submersible Drilling Rig
The Scarabeo 5, the latest and most sophisticated result of Saipem's technology in the offshore drilling platform sector. This is a semi-submersible platform designed to operate throughout the world, even in very harsh and hostile environments such as the sub-arctic seas.

Saipem has been employing the Scarabeo 5, its new semi-submersible drilling vessel, to tackle technical and environmental problems. Carrying out the contract, Saipem is working in close co-operation by Polystar AIS, Stavanger (Rasmussen Group). The agreement also provides options for others wells drilling and "workover" in the Snorre Field, employing the Scarabeo 5 up to 1998. The Scarabeo 5 represents the most recent unit of a novel class of new generation semi-submersibles, being one of the most advanced drilling rigs available. She will have maximum operational flexibility due to the fact that she is complying with all rules and regulations known to date for operation on the continental shelf of several countries.

Operational functions

The Scarabeo 5 is based on Maritime Engineering design and was built in Italy by Fincantieri in its factories (Genoa). The main operational functions of the vessel are exploratory drilling and production drilling. The Scarabeo 5 consists of main deck (double bottom, main, mezzanine & upper deck) 2 pontoons, 6 large columns, 2 horizontal bracings and 4 horizontal diagonals. Deck house, cranes and enclosed substructure derrick, drill floor with associated equipment are installed. In addition a secondary (700 sq.m.) riser deck is available, for operations in very deep waters or in case when several casing strings are to be kept onboard simultaneously or prepared to receive production modules. Total power available for propulsion is rated 18,800 kW. Total installed power is rated 28,000 kW. The maximum variable deckload is 4,500 m. in all conditions.

The Scarabeo 5 complies with all latest rules and regulations. A simple basic structure, with minimum wind and current resistance and smooth surfaces of the upper hull to prevent build-up of ice, no vertical bracings to avoid icing and to facilitate possible entrance of barges between the columns to bring in heavy templates to be installed on the seabed by the rig itself.

The rig systems are made with a high degree of redundancy. All pipings, such as cooling water, fuel oil, ballast, service air, are, as far as possible, routed clear of hazardous areas. The accommodation module is made with structural fire protection according to the rules for units involved in oil production. This module has been designed as a "safe haven", well protected from main risk areas and with sheltered escapeways to the meeting points for abandonment.

The platform is kept in position by eight anchors and eight thrusters. The dynamic positioning control system simulates continuously possible failures in the anchor/thruster systems in order to display the consequences of any failure to the position of the rig and the remedial options available.

Automation and rig management

The automation, control and management system is an integrated system based on computers. The system is connected to over 5,000 i/o points in order to perform the main functions. The drilling design criteria enable the rig to drill up to 9,000 m. in water depth up to 1,800 m.

Safety

The rig is designed for maximum efficiency and safety. All the latest requirements have been taken into account. The unit is able to work with the loss of any one of the bracings and have sufficient stability to withstand loss of any one of the columns or 2 damaged compartments.

The design of the main hull has been made in such a way that escapeways within the working area and living quarters will not be affected.

The Scarabeo 5 is made to incorporate all experiences gained from previous semi-submersible designs and the unit is developed to meet the most stringent requirements for worldwide drilling operations.



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EBURY STREET LONDON EFWH 0JR
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Public's purse shields industry in tough times

Although a double-edged sword, the benefits of a large state sector protect jobs in a recession, Paul Bompard reports

A well-known peculiarity of the Italian economy is that about a fifth of the country's industry is state controlled, including about 80 per cent of the banking. If one only considers heavy industry, and those sectors usually described as "strategic" such as electronics, steel and defence, the proportion controlled by the state is enormous by western European standards.

This system has often been criticised on the grounds that politicians inevitably meddle in the running of the companies involved, and use them to exercise patronage, which can often affect efficiency and competitiveness. Yet state industry has access to government funding, and the political control is not always negative for the country.

In the Eighties, most of state industry became profitable as more dynamic management combined with a general improvement in the Italian economy. It was suggested, and to a great extent accepted, that the state would gradually sell the companies it controlled back to private owners, and so make a dent in the massive national debt.

Today, however, all these

plans seem to have been forgotten by the politicians and the management of Italy's three main public industrial groups. On the one hand, prospects are not as good as they were a year or two ago, which has inevitably discouraged potential buyers. On the other, a depressed stock market has made partial privatisation of state companies less attractive.

The state industrial system consists of three main holding companies. The largest is the Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale (IRI), with more than 400,000 employees. Its interests include banking, shipbuilding, high-technology electronics and telecommunications, steel, aerospace, defence, Alitalia, the national airline, and RAI, the state television and radio authority. Then there is Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi (ENI), which is concerned with petroleum products, natural gas, and Italy's biggest chemicals group. Recently, after a joint chemicals venture with Montedison failed, ENI acquired most of Montedison's chemical interests.

The third group, Ente Partecipazioni e Finanziamento Industria Manifatturiera (EFIM), is firmly

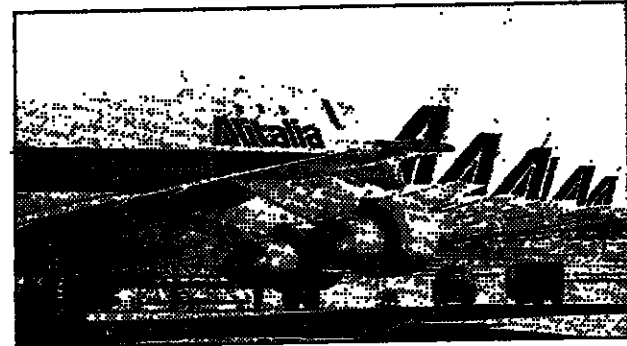
rooted in engineering: helicopters (Agusta), heavy transport systems, defence products from missiles to tanks and artillery, glass and aluminium and light alloys, as well as the construction of industrial plants.

All three groups have seen a levelling-off of the increasing growth and profits of the past few years. The mood of management is one of caution and cost-cutting, a sharp contrast with the unbridled euphoria of only a couple of years ago.

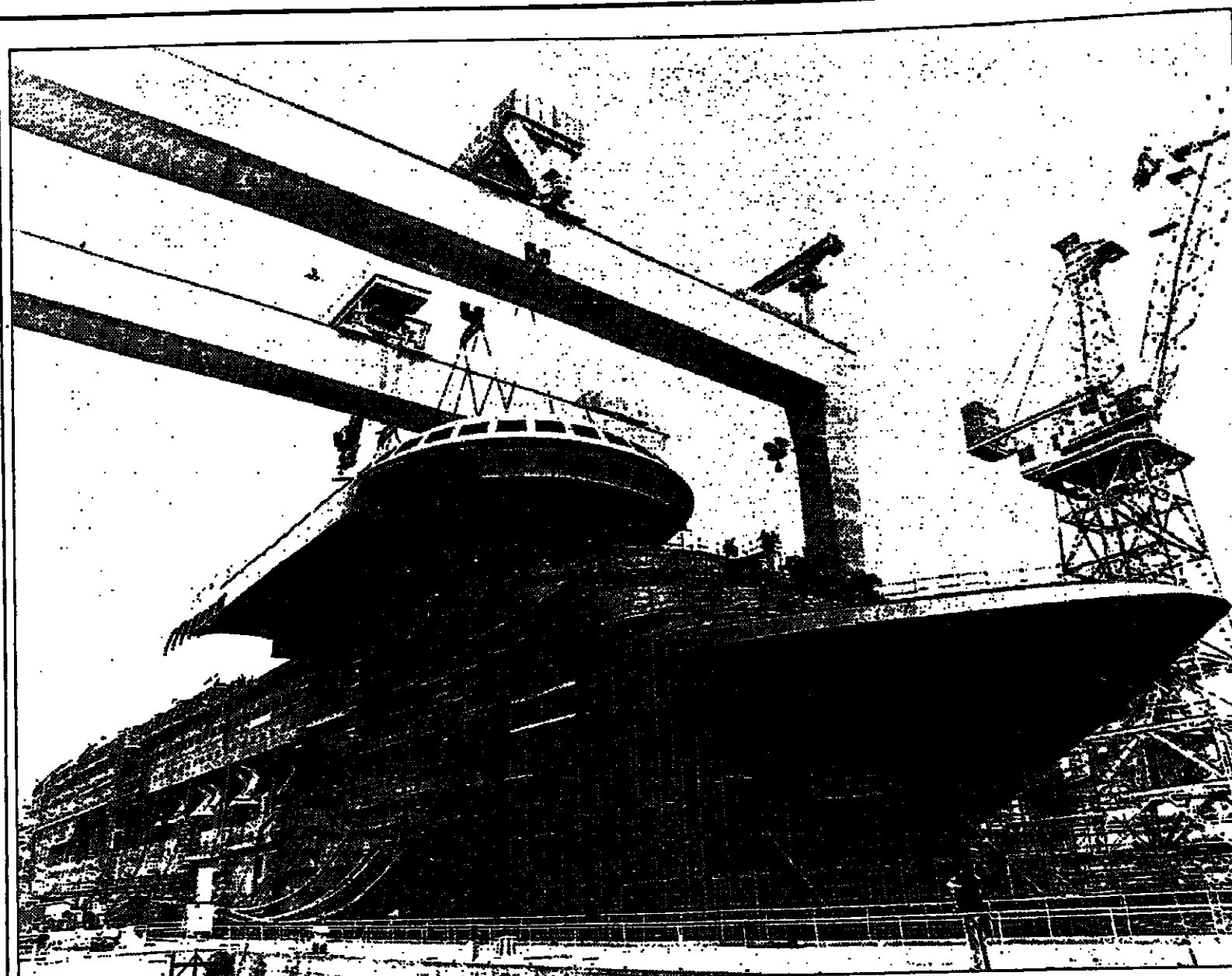
Giulio de Capraris, a senior analyst, of Confindustria, the national federation of industrialists, says: "The fact is that state industry enjoys special subsidies, and so is not in fair competition with private industry. This also harms the state industries themselves."

"The state's industrial role is no longer clear. In the past, its purpose was to protect key sectors such as steel, to industrialise the south of Italy. Many mistakes were made, but at least the purpose of it all was clear. Now I have the feeling that there is some sort of identity crisis." So far, however, and bearing in mind the worldwide recession, the vast machine of Italian state industry is holding its ground.

The euphoria of the late Eighties, when turnover and profits grew each year, is past, especially after the Gulf war. Alitalia, for instance, is expected to lose about £250 million in 1991, while Fincantieri, the shipbuilder, which is still holding four frigates and four corvettes ordered by Iraq, lost £70 million last year. But the unprofitable companies are balanced by the money earners.



Clipped wings: Alitalia is expected to lose £250 million



Floating assets: the Regal Princess, an order from P&O, is nearing completion at Monfalcone, near Trieste, the biggest shipyard in Europe

Saddam sinks shipping profits

Shipbuilding in Italy is dominated by Fincantieri, part of the state-controlled Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale (IRI) group, which has about 70 per cent of the national market.

The rest includes the Apuania yards in Tuscany of EFIM, another state corporation, private specialist companies such as Rodriguez, of Messina (hydrofoils), Intermarine, near La Spezia (hulls of new materials), and numerous pleasure craft builders.

But for an Iraqi millstone round its neck, Fincantieri's future would be rosy. The British P&O company ordered two 70,000-ton cruise

liners, of which the first, the Crown Princess, taking 1,680 passengers, has been in service since last summer. Orders have followed for five more cruise ships, so that Fincantieri claims world leadership in the sector. For non-military vessels, the company's yards have orders until early 1994.

The Crown Princess's sister ship, Regal Princess, is nearing completion at Monfalcone, near Trieste, Europe's biggest shipyard. This summer, after the launch of the last of three 260,000-ton ore carriers for the state-owned Finmare, the 55,000-ton Stat-

endam will be laid down, the first of three cruise ships for Holland America line.

At Porto Marghera, near Venice, the 50,000-ton Costa Classica will be ready late this year for Costa line of Genoa, to be followed by the construction of the Costa Romantica.

Until the P&O order, Fincantieri's market was mainly domestic. The company is now negotiating with P&O for a third cruise liner, larger than the two Princesses. All these vessels will incorporate the latest anti-noise and anti-vibration techniques and Italian-style design for

public rooms. At the same time the company sees a future in going upmarket, and has designed a more exclusive 32,000-ton vessel for up to 780 passengers, the Alabarda, though it has no orders so far. However, the company is still a long way from profit.

Fincantieri expects a 1990 loss of about 250 billion lire (£116 million), similar to the previous year's. Of this, at least 150 billion lire (£70 million) is accounted for by the Iraqi millstone.

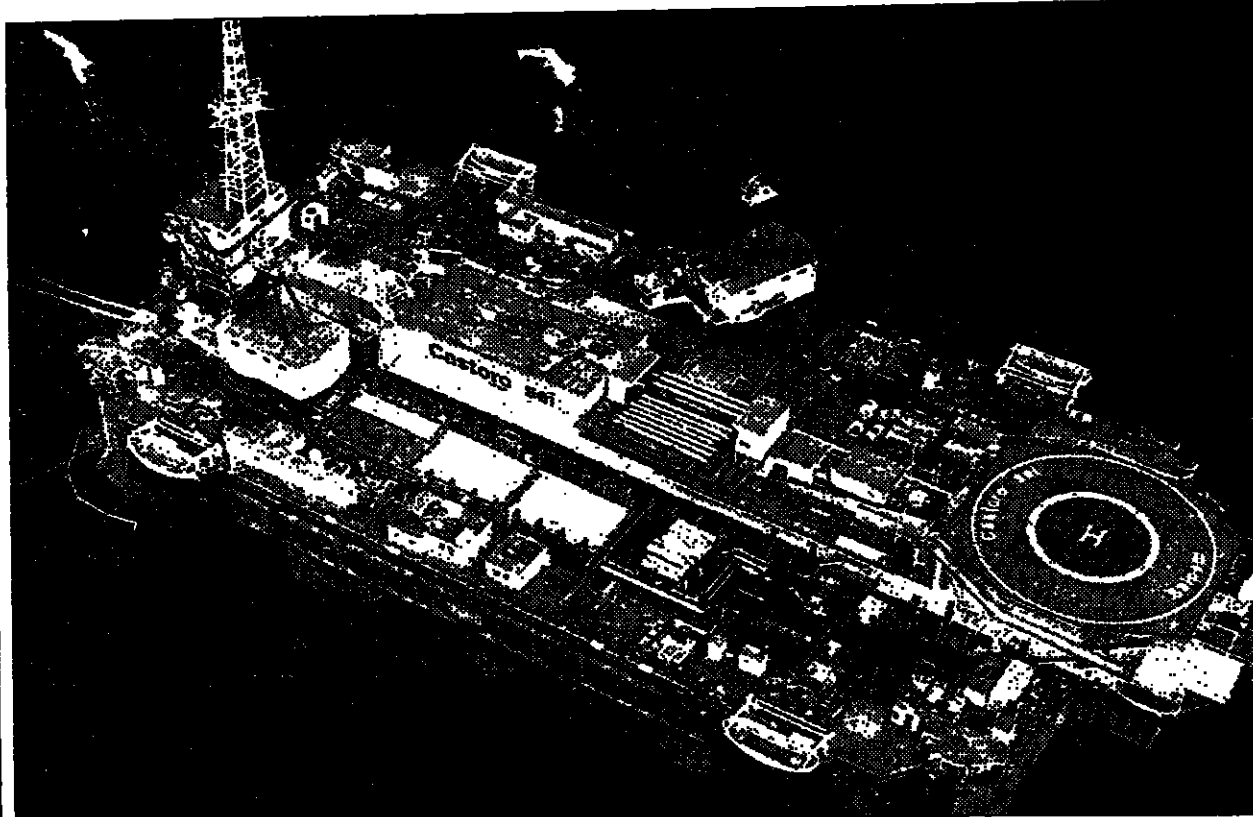
Fincantieri has been sid-

dled with eight vessels, four frigates and four corvettes, out of 11 ordered by President Saddam Hussein two years ago as a navy to dominate the Gulf. The ships could not be delivered originally because of the war with Iran, and obviously will not be delivered now.

To cut losses, the company is to close four yards of its ship repair division and retain two to concentrate on ship conversion. The warship division remains without orders. Altogether, Fincantieri hopes to lighten its 20,000 workforce by offering 3,000 early retirements.

JOHN EARLE

Italian job for the North Sea



Floating assets: Italian industry is in the front rank of offshore expertise in building platforms for oil exploration

Near Syracuse, in Sicily, Italoffshore is building a 17,000-ton platform "jacket", or metal framework, for Agip's T-block oilfield in the North Sea off Britain.

Next spring, the T-block jacket will be towed by barge to the North Sea, there to be "self-erected", or tipped over the side on to its feet on the sea floor 130 yards below (John Earle writes).

Italoffshore is a consortium originally set up to involve Sicilian firms in making the jacket for Vega, an oilfield in Sicilian waters. The designer of the North Sea jacket and the expert in the procedure is Tecnomare, a company under joint public-private ownership.

Italian industry is in the

front rank of offshore expertise. A group headed by ENI, including Saipem, Snamprogetti, Tecnomare and Spea, a subsidiary of Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale (IRI), the other big state corporation, has drawn up plans for joining Sicily to the mainland across the Strait of Messina by tunnel.

There would be three tunnels, one rail (about three miles long) and two road. Unlike the Channel venture, however, they would not go underground, but be suspended underwater.

The Italian government favours a rival project by IRI for a single-span bridge.

ENI is also to lay two pipelines, thus doubling the quantity of Algerian gas available to Europe.

Builders bank on foreign contracts

Delegates from Italy's leading industries, led by Renato Ruggiero, the foreign trade minister, have just completed a tour of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia aimed at getting contracts to rebuild desalination plants, power plants and roads.

Italy's civil engineers spend much of their time abroad. In 1989, 58 per cent of their contracts were with African countries. The rest were in Europe, Asia and the Americas. In recent years, however, there have been fewer contracts. Most Italian engineering and building companies have weathered this; others have responded with mergers.

Among the latter is the newly formed Cogefar-Im-

presit, a Milan-based combination of the Cogefar engineering company, which once belonged to the Bastogi group, and Impresit, once the engineering division of Fiat. Since the merger, Cogefar-Impresit has successfully contended for big contracts, particularly in Africa. These include Morocco's M'Jara hydro-electric dam, on which it will work with the Milan-based Torno construction companies.

Italian companies have been getting more contracts from European Community countries and have seen the beginnings of future business

in joint ventures in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe. "As a result," says Lia Zucca, of the Association of Building Constructors, which groups together about 16,000 civil engineering companies, "there seems to be a surprising increase in contracts, estimated at around 20 per cent more than the previous year."

Meanwhile, Italy's engineering concerns are still active in their traditional stamping ground of Africa. Elsewhere, work on the second Bosphorus bridge and its roadworks, a Turkish-British-Italian joint venture, is in its final stages. Contracts concluded in 1990

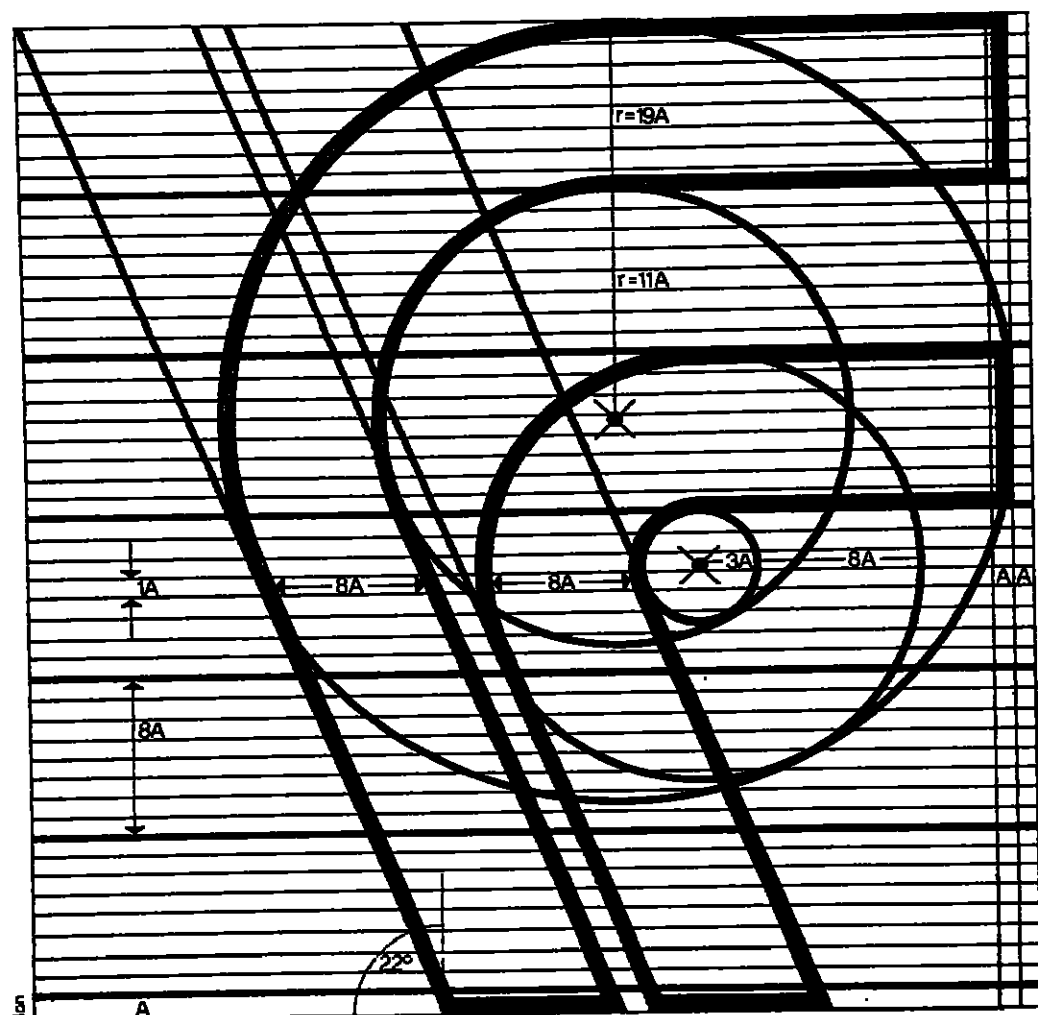
include part of the first motorway in Romania, built by Italstrade, a division of the state-owned IRI-Italstat group. Italstrade was also awarded an important highway contract in the Soviet Union - more than 800 miles of carriageway in Kazakhstan.

Within Italy, plans include a \$7 billion (£3.9 billion) government project to redevelop the outskirts of Naples, to move Rome's ministerial offices to an eastern suburb (to be entirely rebuilt out of virtual wasteland) and perhaps to complete the capital's most controversial public building - a mosque, the only Islamic building in Rome.

JANET STOBART

IRI GROUP

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Law Report March 28 1991 Court of Appeal

Sleepwalker fails in automatism appeal against jury's insanity verdict

Regina v Burgess
Before Lord Lane, Lord Chief Justice, Mr Justice Roch and Mr Justice Mordant
[Judgment March 27]

A man who claimed to have been sleepwalking when he wounded a woman and that he was suffering from non-insane automatism and therefore lacked the necessary *mens rea* to make him guilty of wounding with intent, failed in an appeal against a finding of non-guilty by reason of insanity, whereupon he had been ordered to be detained in such hospital as the Home Secretary directed.

The finding was made in respect of Barry Douglas Burgess, aged 39, after an eight-day trial in July 1989 at Bristol Crown Court (Judge Sir Ian Lewis and a jury) on a charge of contravening section 18 of the Offences against the Person Act 1861 by wounding with intent. The victim was a woman, who was lying on the floor of a flat above the appellant's in Kingswood, Avon.

The finding was made under section 2(1) of the Trial of Lunatics Act 1883, as amended by section 1 of the Criminal Procedure (Insanity) Act 1964, which provides: "Where... any act... is charged against any

person as an offence, and it is given in evidence on the trial... that he was insane, so as not to be responsible, according to law, for his action at the time when the act was done... then, if it appears to the jury... that he did the act... but was insane as aforesaid at the time when he did... the same, the jury shall return a special verdict that the accused is not guilty by reason of insanity."

Mr Christopher Wilson-Smith, QC and Mr R. N. O'Brien, QC, appeared for the appellant, Mr R. N. O'Brien, QC and Mr Stanley Carledge for the Crown.

The LORD CHIEF JUSTICE, giving the reserved judgment of the court, said that the appellant did not dispute the fact that he had attacked Miss Curtis by hitting her on the head and grasping her round the throat. She suffered a 3cm laceration to her scalp requiring sutures.

The prosecution contended that the case was not one of automatism but that the appellant was conscious of what he was doing. If, contrary to that contention, he was not conscious of what he was doing,

then the case fell within the McNaghen Rules (1843) 10 C & F 200 and the special verdict should be given. Eminent medical experts were called by the defence and by the prosecution.

Where the defence of automatism was raised by a defendant, two questions fell to be decided by the judge before the defence could be left to the jury: 1 Whether a proper evidential foundation for the defence of automatism had been laid; 2 Whether the evidence showed the case to be one of insane automatism, that is, falling within the McNaghen Rules, or one of non-insane automatism.

The judge undertook that task and concluded that, assuming the appellant was not conscious at the time of what he was doing, on any view of the medical evidence so far as automatism was concerned, it amounted to evidence of insanity within the McNaghen Rules and not merely to evidence of non-insane automatism.

The sole ground of appeal was that that ruling was wrong. The jury then had to decide on the basis of the judge's direction, which followed his ruling, whether the appellant was conscious when he struck

Miss Curtis, in which case the verdict would be guilty, or whether he was not guilty by reason of insanity.

The material part of the McNaghen Rules stated: "The jurors ought to be told in all cases that every man is presumed to be sane and to possess a sufficient degree of reason to be responsible for his crimes, until the contrary be proved to their satisfaction; and that to establish a defence on the ground of insanity, it must be clearly proved that, at the time of the committing of the act, the party accused was labouring under such a defect of reason, from disease of the mind, as not to know the nature and quality of the act he was doing, or, if he did know it, that he did not know he was doing what was wrong."

What the law regarded as insanity for the purposes of those provisions might be far removed from what would be regarded as insanity by a psychiatrist.

There could be no doubt that the appellant, on the basis of the jury's verdict, was conscious of what he was doing when he wounded Miss Curtis.

The question was whether that was from disease of the mind.

The first point that had to be understood was that the phrase was "disease of the mind" and not "disease of the brain", see *McNaghen* (1843) 10 C & F 200.

The appellant plainly suffered from a defect of reason from some sort of failure, for lack of a better term, of the mind causing him to act as he did without conscious motivation.

His mind was to some extent controlling his actions, which were purposive rather than the result simply of muscular spasm, but without his being consciously aware of what he was doing.

Could it be said that that failure was a disease of the mind rather than a defect or failure of the mind not due to disease?

That was a distinction, by no means always easy to draw, on which the case depended.

The field of enquiry could be narrowed further by eliminating what were sometimes called the external factors, such as concussion resulting from a blow on the head. There were no such factors here. Whatever the cause might have been, it was an internal cause.

The possible disappointment or frustration caused by unrequited love was not to be equated with something such as concussion, and their Lordships respectfully adopted what was said by Mr Justice Martin and approved by a majority in the Supreme Court of Canada in *R v The Queen* (1980) 2 SCR 513, 520: "... the ordinary stresses and disappointments of life which are the common lot of mankind, do not constitute an external cause constituting an explanation for a malfunctioning of the mind which takes it out of the category of a disease of the mind. To hold otherwise would deprive a concept of an external factor of any real meaning."

The distinction between internal and external factors appeared in *R v Sullivan* (1984) AC 156, 172.

Their Lordships respectfully adopted the definition in *Attorney General for Northern Ireland v Gallagher* (1963) AC 386, 412: "... any mental disorder which has manifested itself in violence and is prone to recur is a disease of the mind. At any rate it is the sort of disease for which a person should be detained in hospital rather than be given an unqualified acquittal."

That respectful adoption was subject to the possible qualification that, if there was a danger of recurrence, that might be an added reason for categorizing the condition as a disease of the mind. On the other hand, the absence of the danger of recurrence was not a reason for saying that it could not be a disease of the mind.

There had been several occasions during judgments in the Court of Appeal and the House of Lords when observations had been made, albeit, about the criminal responsibility of sleepwalkers, where sleepwalking had been used as a self-evident illustration of non-insane automatism.

As part of *R v Parks* (1990) 56 CCC (3d) 49, which was taken, their Lordships understood, to the Supreme Court of Canada, and, so far as their Lordships could discover, in none of the other cases where sleepwalking had been mentioned had the court had the advantage of the sort of medical expert evidence which was available to the judge here.

His Lordship reviewed the expert medical evidence and said that, on that evidence, the

judge was right to conclude that this was an abnormality or disorder, albeit transitory, due to an internal factor, whether functional or organic, which had manifested itself in violence.

It was a disorder or abnormality which might recur, although the possibility of its recurring in the form of serious violence was unlikely. Therefore, since that was a legal problem to be decided on legal principles, on those principles the answer was as the judge found it to be.

It went further than that. A defence medical expert stated it as his view that the condition would be regarded as pathological. Pathology was the science of diseases. It seemed, therefore, that in that respect at least there was some similarity between the law and medicine.

The judge was alive to the apparent incongruity of labelling that sort of disability as insanity. He drew attention, as their Lordships would also wish to do, to a passage in the speech of Lord Diplock in *Sullivan*, where he said (at p173) that it did not lie within the power of the courts to alter the statute, only Parliament could do that and had done so twice and could do so once again.

Solicitors: CFS, Bristol.

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We are a registered charity. Candidates must be sympathetic to the particular aims and objectives of an arts venue and its working environment. A strong interest in music and/or the visual arts is highly desirable. We are seeking a highly motivated person who will have the imagination and energy to make a positive contribution to the Centre as a whole.

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GOLF

Woosnam plots US showdown with No. 1 Faldo

From MITCHELL PLATT
GOLF CORRESPONDENT
PONTA VEDRA, FLORIDA

NICK Faldo and Ian Woosnam, who tee up within minutes of each other in The Players Championship here today, are on the threshold of becoming the game's biggest box office draw since Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus.

Faldo, the Masters and Open champion, took last week off when the inspirational Woosnam entranced the American nation by winning the US&G Classic in New Orleans. But Faldo, aware that Woosnam, by winning, could topple him from No. 1 in the Sony world rankings, is determined to return with a vengeance.

"Woosie has always been saying he's the best in the world," Faldo said. "He was saying it in 1987 when he won seven times and I won only twice. But I won the Open Championship and I've won the titles that don't half help the bank balance."

"I'd guarantee that he would trade every one of his titles for the ones I've got. But

Card of the course

Hole	Yds	Par	Hole	Yds	Par
1	388	4	10	395	4
2	326	3	11	389	4
3	182	3	12	336	3
4	284	4	13	172	3
5	454	5	14	426	4
6	391	4	15	426	4
7	439	5	16	457	5
8	215	3	17	132	3
9	362	5	18	440	4
Out 3,581 36		In 3,585 36			
Total yardage 6,800		Par 72			

I'm pleased that Woosie is pushing me. It's good, healthy competition. It creates atmosphere. And we are good comrades in arms... when we want to be."

Faldo and Woosnam, of course, will very much be comrades in arms when Europe play the United States in the Ryder Cup in September. Andy O'Brien, a spokesman for the PGA of America, said: "The European golfers are really hot properties over here now. The Ryder Cup is a sell-out and the public are simply clamouring to watch them."

Woosnam, of course, increased his own following by winning his first US PGA Tour event. In fact his record

in the last 12 months is as impressive as any player in the world. He has won seven tournaments and finished runner-up five times. "I think tee to green I have the edge over Nick," Woosnam said. "But he has the edge over me around the greens."

Woosnam says with candour that he cannot expect himself to hit the ball much better. But he is attempting to develop a sharper mental picture when it comes to chipping and to be more consistent on the greens. "I think I'm the best player not to have won a major," Woosnam said.

José María Olazábal, of Spain who is making his first appearance in the competition, might disagree with that. Last August he won the World Series of Golf by 12 shots. "That win broke a wall," Olazábal said. "I had never won in the States." He will need to break another wall by winning on The Tournament Players Course. Payne Stewart is the only one of the leading 20 players not competing.

Statistics puzzle Richardson

STEVE Richardson, the winner of two of the first five tournaments of the year, who heads the order of merit by more than £40,000, is baffled by his absence from the latest PGA European Tour statistics. Richardson, from Lee-on-Solent, Hampshire, goes into the Volvo European Open, today at Ugento, as the outstanding European player of 1991 and almost certain to make his Ryder Cup debut in September. "I just don't know how they work it out," Richardson, who has won £136,000 this year, said. "But it seems strange that I am not in any of the lists."

Peter McEvoy, the former amateur champion who compiles the lists, said: "There is not enough data in the system and, until there is, the statistics don't mean very much."

'Dinah' a magnet for celebrities

RANCHO Mirage, California—Los Angeles to Palm Springs is a well-beaten trail for movie stars and celebrities, and this week it was the Oscars one night and the Nabisco Dinah Shore, at Mission Hills country club, the next (Patricia Davies writes). The first round of the \$600,000 tournament is today, but it really started on Monday, and the partying and the business continue all week. Betsy King, the defending champion, described this as "the tournament that has probably done more for women's golf than any other event." In its first year, 1971, the \$110,000 prize-money was massive by women's standards, and Dinah Shore was an inspired choice as the event's patron. She gave up tennis and be-

came hooked on golf. Every player now wants to go to the "Dinah", the women's answer to the Masters. It is the sort of event where the public address system calls Charles Schultz to the first tee, and Sylvester Stallone to his table in the dining-room. Laura Davies has earned herself enough celebrity to play in two of the pro-ams, partnering Rod Laver (who dislikes talking about tennis) one day and Lawrence Taylor (who dislikes being outed) the next. Alison Nicholas and Pam Wright have both been before but it is a new experience for Helen Alfredsson, the British Open champion, from Sweden. "I've played the course twice and I've been practising hard and working out," she said.



Excalibur: Page brandishing the magic sword that is penning a new chapter in the legend of British swimming

Page turning the clock back

By CRAIG LORD

ASK any child—a forward roll is far easier to execute than a backstroke roll. Exploiting that simple philosophy, courtesy of swimming's rule-makers, Britons are helping to bring new meaning to the phrase "turning the clock back."

Within a week of a relaxation of backstroke rules by Fina, the sport's world governing body, Sharon Page broke British records at 50 metres and 100 metres to lift herself to the top of this year's world rankings at those distances. At the 50 metres, she stands 0.33sec off the world record.

Her lead was followed a week later at the first two rounds of the World Cup by Joanne Deakin, of Gloucester, who lowered Commonwealth record at 200 metres twice within four days. She was also rewarded by a world No. 1 ranking.

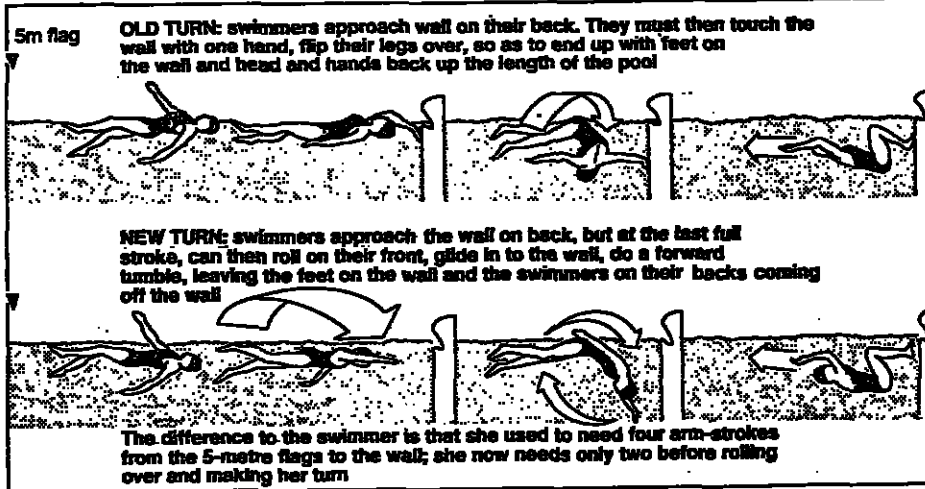
At the heart of this activity is

a rule which stated that, from March 3, swimmers no longer had to touch the wall with their hand at the turn. This allowed them to start their roll into the wall much sooner, no longer requiring them to be on their backs until they made contact with the wall.

The result has been a semi-freestyle (front) flip, which Page executes with devastating accuracy and speed. She became the first British woman to break 1min 20sec at the 100 metres.

Unlike the rest of the nation's leading swimmers, Page trains alone. Her schedules are made up a week in advance by Keith Bewley, of Mercury Wigan Wasps, and mailed to the Page family home in Norfolk. Mike Page then takes time out from the amusement arcade he owns on Great Yarmouth front to watch over his daughter's lonely pursuit of excellence six days a week.

In the World Cup at Leningrad yesterday, Page passed her first test on the international arena using the new turn; she won the 100 metres in 1min 02.78.



SPORTS LETTERS

Preserving the game's assets

From Mr Michael Stannard
Sir, In the week after England's rugby union grand slam triumph it was reported that Roger Utley, the country's leading coach, the team manager, were to quit. How appalling! How sad! How pathetically British—no, English!

Our gifted nation fails once again to:

1. rise to the occasion
2. recognise the need
3. have the nous to ensure that it preserves the solution that it has had the very insight and brilliance to identify and apply with such successful, enthralling and wondrous results.

The members of the RFU committee are duty bound for all our sakes to finally come of age and provide a financial solution for the esteemed gentlemen who have produced the results. They must do this while still protecting the spirit of our amateur ideals. Tough? Yes. But they must do it.

Yours faithfully,
M. R. A. STANNARD,
Kestrel House,
Broad High Way,
Cobham, Surrey.

From the Secretary of the Rugby Football Union
Sir, Mr Davids, a self-styled grass-roots rugby player (March 21), raises some interesting points to which I am happy to respond. But first of all, a question: how does he imagine the teaching and promotion of rugby football for the young, given the decline in the playing of team games in schools, are to be paid for and how are we to finance the maintenance and modernisation of a stadium like Twickenham? The new North Stand did not just grow of its own accord and a further £50 million or so will be needed in due course to replace the ageing East and West stands. If he accepts there is possibly a need for funds, surely he is not criticising the RFU for being efficient at raising them?

I would think that the proportion of tickets deliberately set aside for commercial purposes at Twickenham is lower than at any comparable sporting venue. Certainly the number of temporary seats, to which Mr Davids takes exception, is lower than at any of the national grounds of other home unions.

Blanco joins immortals

From Mr J. P. B. Ross
Sir, I am an old—very old—life-long fan of the game of football. As such, I was privileged to have witnessed the feats performed at Twickenham by Nepia—the legendary Maori full back of the All Blacks team that shook Twickenham to its foundations in 1925.

I dare to suggest that Nepia's pinnacle of renown must now be added to, or at least shared with, Serge Blanco, of France, as the greatest full back(s) in living memory.

I have watched Blanco's games on television in all the five nations' championship matches in which he has played since he was first capped a decade or more ago. He is superb in defence or attack, incomparable in his ability to turn a defensively sound situation on his head with an inspired and unexpected run that opens up the game in a trice. He then uses his great athletic speed to become, as it were, the spearhead of an attack he has initiated from behind and finishes up on the opposition's goaline having set off from inside his own goal-area.

Such was the incredibly well wrought and beautifully developed movement against England at Twickenham that resulted in Saint-André's try. Blanco was unarguably, if indirectly, the composer and orchestrator of that score.

Nepia and Blanco are fitting doorkeepers of the pantheon of rugby football. Who else is such a figure of the international game, whose skills are still talked about long after he has retired from the game (if not from this globe)? Fame, even great renown, in his playing days and being the cynosure of the eyes of his contemporaries is not enough. The aspirant for the Pantheon must have become a legend, even to those who never saw him play but who hear tell of or read of his feats in the legends of the game. They are not many.

Yours faithfully,
J. P. B. ROSS,
Château de la Ferrière,
La Ferrière de Flée,
49500 Segré,
France.

Marathon's men of vision

From the General Secretary of The Central Council of Physical Recreation

Sir, I was appalled by the Channel 4 programme *Dispatches* on the London marathon, screened on March 20. If what I witnessed could even remotely be described as responsible television journalism, I must be a very poor judge of such concepts as fairness and prejudice.

Christopher Brasher and John Disley are men of great vision. It was their commitment and determination that brought to this country, through its capital city, one of the finest sporting spectacles in the world.

That a succession of former employees and business associates can be given free reign to denigrate without question the achievements of these men is quite astonishing.

I hope Brasher and Disley will take some comfort from my certain knowledge that throughout sport in Britain they have many genuine friends.

Yours faithfully,
PETER LAWSON,
General Secretary,
The Central Council of Physical Recreation,
Francis House,
Francis Street, SW1.

England restricted

From Mr G. R. Taylor

Sir, I must take issue with Roy Marsden's comments about the lack of try-scoring ability in the current English rugby team (March 21).

Having watched all of England's games during the five nations' championship, I was struck by the number of times that England's opponents were penalised for killing the ball in positions where England were probably going to obtain good second-phase possession and where England's backs were poised. In many instances where this occurred England kicked the resultant scrum.

The end result, with a preponderance of penalties and few tries, may seem to point to an

unadventurous team. However, this is the same team that scored so many tries last season; the backs are just as talented. It cannot be proven, but I suspect that if the ball had been allowed to flow by England's opponents, England would have scored many more tries.

All of this does not mean that England will win the World Cup, but who would object if they reached the final and won it off the boot of Simon Hodgkinson, particularly if his opportunities arose as a result of so much good, whole-team based, approach play.

Yours faithfully,
G. R. TAYLOR,
Berkhamstead,
Hertfordshire.

Ability holds key

From Mr J. Hutchinson

Sir, Keith Macklin (March 15) suggested that if the Lancashire stranglehold on major rugby league trophies was to be loosened this season, the key would be fixture congestion rather than ability.

His selection of results to justify his view took no account of the fact that the two Yorkshire contenders for the title, Hull and Castleford, have lost only one home league match between them. Hull have led the league for much of the season and have beaten both Wigan and Widnes by substantial margins, while Castleford, whom

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From Lord Killam

Sir, With reference to the Marjals v AC Milan match (report, March 21), why is it thought unsporting—even against the rules—to "concede" in football?

It is perfectly acceptable to concede in golf or snooker; to declare in cricket; to "throw in" in boxing; or poker; and to "resign" in chess.

It seems that the spectators had (at least) their full 90 minutes of excitement, so short-changing the customer can hardly be the reason either.

Yours faithfully,
KILLAM,
58 Melton Court,
Old Brompton Road, SW7.

Two-edged blade

From Mr Matthew Oates

Sir, Will the new double-sided cricket bat (front page, March 22) bring about the development of the reverse hook?

Yours faithfully,
MATTHEW OATES,
Bladings,
34 Kingsland Road,
Alton, Hampshire.

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SQUASH RACKETS

Leeke's action is criticised

THE disqualification of Brian Beeson, the England captain, for arriving seven minutes late to play for L and P Lambs against Leekes Wizards in the last Pimm's Premier League fixture of the season, was yesterday deplored by leading figures in the game.

A clash between the last league night and the first round of the Scottish open championship had players scurrying around Britain on Tuesday. Ross Norman, for instance, played and won in Glasgow, flew to London, then drove to Birmingham in order to lead Carlisle Cannons, the new champions, against Mosaic Priory.

Norman won a tremendous first string match, 4-0, 9-7, 10-5, 9-6, against David Campion at Edgworth Priory, but Cannons lost 3-1 for the second time since securing the title two weeks ago, having not lost a match to that point.

With L and P Lambs still in with a chance of second place, Beeson survived a long, five-set, first-round match in Glasgow on Tuesday, flew to Heathrow, took the underground into London and a taxi to Lambs Club. He arrived through the

back door at 6.37pm just as he was being disqualified at the front for missing the 6.30pm registration deadline.

With Hiddy Jahan brought in as reserve and Philip Kanyon moved up to third string, Lambs went down 3-1 to the Welsh side and lost second place to them by one point. Their only consolation was a forfeit, 9-5, 9-6, 9-2, win by Jahangir Khan over Chris Robertson at first string.

Earlier in the season Leekes defeated another London side, Stars and Stripes, after insisting that the player registration rule be used to disqualify Jahangir Khan, the world champion, because he was not actually inside Stripes club at 6.30pm.

"It was a disappointing way to end the season," Mike Corby, the Lambs owner, said. "Leekes would probably have beaten us by the same margin without resorting to such actions. There was nothing much at stake; just a few hundred pounds difference in prize-money. It was a sorry sort of thing to do."

RESULTS: Mosaic Priory 3, Carlisle Cannons 1; L and P Lambs 1, Leekes Wizards 3; Stars and Stripes 4, Lyric Strathmore 0; Sports Association 2, North Westham 2.

Final table	P	W	L	D	Pts
Cannons	10	2	2	0	24
Leekes	10	2	2	0	24
Lambs	10	3	0	0	30
Team Albion	10	3	0	0	30
Stars and Stripes	10	3	0	0	30
North Westham	10	3	0	0	30
Priory	10	3	0	0	30
Strathmore	10	1	1	4	24
Abbeylea	10	0	1	5	22

SKIING

Curry nears quantum leap in the rankings

By ALIX RAMSAY

JILLY Curry rounded off her season in Sweden at the weekend with another World Cup bronze medal in the combined event, to reaffirm her position as the second-best freestyle skier in the world.

It has been an important year for Curry, as she approaches the 1992 Winter Olympics. From 12 ranking tournaments she has taken 11 medals, including one gold and seven silvers. But more impressive than that is her improvement in the aerials, where she finished sixth overall in the rankings.

"This year has been the big breakthrough," she said. "I think it is my concentration that has improved. Last year I finished twelfth but this season I pulled myself together and it just jumped inside out, so it's just a question of having the confidence to trust myself."

Curry now has her great rival, Connie Kissling, of Switzerland, the world No. 1 in combined and aerials, in her sights. "It's hard to get past her for the top ranking, but by getting into the top six in the aerials it makes it more feasible," Curry said. Only the moguls will be an official sport for the Olympics.

with the ballet and aerials demonstration events. Facing the likes of the French, the Americans and the Canadians, who all pour money and time into freestyle skiing, Curry is doubtful of winning her first full Olympic medal. While the top teams travel with a bevy of coaches and trainers, Curry and her British colleagues have been paying their own way for the final rounds of the World Cup.

But despite the financial hardship, Britain's future looks bright. Julia Snel finished fifth in the ballet world rankings, while Vicki Simpson, aged 19, won two events in the Europa Cup.

So far it has been the women who have made the headlines for Britain, but with Neil Munro and Hugh Hutchinson breaking into the top 50, Britain is slowly climbing the world ladder. Jonathon Baynton, the team manager, is looking to 1994, when all three disciplines will be recognised as Olympic sports.

"If we can aim for a top 20 ranking for the men, we can really start to build as a team," he said. "Jilly and Julia have always led the way for us and in Vicki we have a real talent for the future."

Sheffield hosts returning Britons

By CRAIG LORD

ADRIAN Moorhouse competes tomorrow for the first time since losing his 100 metres breaststroke world record and seeing the one major title to elude him slip from his fingertips at the world championships in January.

The fact that the Olympic champion from Leeds will race in the Mycił World Cup meeting at the £52 million Ford's Forge pools complex in Sheffield is more a measure of his commitment to the sport than of his fitness.

After disappointment—if a silver medal and then the fourth fastest time ever recorded can be described as such—at the Perth championship, Moorhouse consoled himself with a tour of Australia and the Far East, part holiday and part lecturing on the sport he loves.

"It was a great time, it helped me put Perth behind me. I'll be at Sheffield and then Edinburgh a week later because you should support the meeters in this country that aim to bring the best in the world to your doorstep," he said.

"I'm obviously not at the peak of fitness, but it should be a good meet anyway," added Moorhouse, who expressed surprise that swimming authorities in Britain did not do more to rally clubs to support the English leg of the World Cup, especially since the event will inaugurate the finest and newest aquatic facility in the country.

The scene that will face Moorhouse at Sheffield will not be unfamiliar. On one of the rare occasions where he is not entered with the fastest time, the man standing in pole position in the 100 metres is his teammate and tenant, James Parrrack, whose disappointment at Perth ran deeper.

Parrrack had gone to Australia as the third fastest in the world, but returned home having failed to make the final. Britain's finest hour is likely to come in the women's breaststroke races, where never before have so many Britons figured so highly in the world rankings. Sharon Page, of Mercury Wigan Wasps, leads the pack in the 50 metres, and is second to Dagmar Hase, the former East German, in the 100 metres.

In the 200 metres Joanne Deakin, of Gloucester City, will want to take revenge on Hase, who beat her in the Milan leg of the World Cup, 02.78.

BOXING

Eubank not willing to share spoils

THE World Boxing Organisation middleweight champion, Chris Eubank, yesterday told his great rival, Nigel Benn: "You've priced yourself out of the market." Benn has made a return contest with Eubank his main priority, but only for a 50-50 split of the purse.

Eubank is unwilling to fall in with such a plan, having taken the short end when the pair met last November. He is more interested in Michael Watson. NEW YORK: There could be three world title bouts on the programme in Las Vegas when Mike Tyson, the former world heavyweight champion, and Donovon Ruddock meet again on June 28 (AFP reports).

Julio Cesar Chavez, of Mexico, already the World Boxing Council (WBC) and International Boxing Federation light-welterweight champion, could be meeting the World Boxing Association champion at the same weight, Loretto Garza, in a unification bout.

Azumah Nelson, of Ghana, will defend his WBC super-featherweight title against Jeff Fenech, of Australia, and Julian Jackson, of the Virgin Islands, the WBC middleweight champion, will face the American, Dennis Milton.

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From the Head of Sport and Events Group, BBC Television

Sir, Mr Dickson (March 21) stated that the BBC was caught napping by the brilliant French try at Twickenham, claiming that the first that viewers saw of the action was well into the French 22. This is incorrect. The try was shown live from the moment Blanco crossed his own goaline.

Yours faithfully,
JONATHAN MARTIN,
Head of Sport and Events Group,
BBC Television,
Kensington House,
Richmond Way, W14.

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John Sam set for winning return

By MANDARIN
JOHN SAM, successful in his three starts in point-to-point this season, is named to take the first division of the Somerset Hunt Cup at Taunton today on his return to National Hunt racing.

This season, John Sam was expected to return to hunter chasing at Stratford at the beginning of the month, but the meeting was abandoned. However, last season Gerry Penfold's gelding showed useful form on the Warwickshire course when fifth to Mystic Music in the *Horde And Hound Cup* on the final day of the National Hunt season. I was also impressed with his victory at Cheltenham in April when he beat Half Free by 20 lengths.

Today he will be fully tested by Third Line, the winner of a ladies' point-to-point at Chaddesley Corbett on March 16, and Marshlander, who was a promising third behind Mount Argus at Nottingham nine days ago.

The second division can go to Timber Tool, a prolific winner between the flags last season the gelding was successful in 11 of his 12 point-to-points. This year he has again shown his prowess with two victories from three outings when partnered by the very experienced Tim Rooney, who again will be in the saddle.

Free Justice, who made a promising seasonal debut at Wolverhampton nine days ago when fourth behind Sol-

diers Duty, appears well treated by the handicapper in the SWEB Handicap Hurdle. Last season, the Jim Wilson-trained gelding was an impressive seven length winner at Hereford when beating the useful Harry Lime.

Sutton Lane, the winner of a National Hunt flat race at Market Rasen last season, can open her account over timber in the Tamerton Novices' Hurdle. On her only outing over hurdles the daughter of Cruise Missile showed plenty of promise when fourth behind Bell Glass at Wolverhampton. At Southwell I expect Tree Poppy to have a change of fortune in the Midlands Radio Novices' Chase. On her previous outing at Chesham she appeared to be unlucky when

falling at the fifth last fence when travelling like a winner. Oliver Sherwood and Jamie Osborne can land a double on the all-weather with After The Number (2.0) and Park Street (3.0).

Park Street has already shown he can handle the surface when beating Feasible by six lengths on the course in January and I feel After The Number's superior class should enable him to regain his form.

At Brighton, Ian Balding's recent run of success over the jumps can be maintained on the Flat with Silver Dilemma in the Churchill Square Stakes. Last season, The Minstrel colt, who is a brother to the top-class sprinter Silver Fling, showed plenty of ability

in good maiden contests. Maurice Camacho's decision to send Calachachi from his Malton yard should be rewarded in the Elm Grove Claiming Stakes. Last season, the Martinmas filly finished the season with five impressive victories.

Mistified looks well-treated at the weights in the Rodeaux Handicap if she can return to her best form.

Prospect of good ground sparks Mr Frisk gamble

By MICHAEL SEELY
RACING CORRESPONDENT
A SUBSTANTIAL gamble developed on Mr Frisk for the Grand National yesterday as last year's winner was backed from 25-1 to 16-1 with Coral.

On the face of it, the 12-year-old gelding faces a formidable task under a probable 11st 5lb, an increase of 13lb on last year's winning weight. But the prospect of improved conditions underfoot has inspired confidence in the veteran specialist.

John Farrer, Aintree's general manager and clerk of the course, said yesterday: "When I walked the course at this morning the going was good to soft on the National course. The sky is overcast but it's dry and there's a keen wind. The forecast for the rest of the week is good."

With the world's greatest steeplechase now only nine days away, excitement is beginning to mount.

No finer pointer to Garrison Savannah's chance could have been given than yesterday's publication of the weather for the Whitbread Gold Cup, in which the Cheltenham Gold Cup winner has been raised 16th. Jimmy Pinhorn's announcement that the National is now the most likely target for her Cheltenham winner has seen Garrison Savannah generally on offer at 6-1 with a run. Corals saw the odds run out in favour of Garrison Savannah at 15-2 all in runners.

There was also interest in the David Nicholson-trained Biggles, who has been the favourite for five years in succession, disappointed on the fast going



Richardson has retired

when pulled up in the Gold Cup. "With hindsight he was probably going over the top," said the trainer yesterday. "He's been roughed off and will be turned out in a few days for the summer. His main objective in the first half of next season will be the Welsh National."

Neale Doughty, with the amazing record of having completed the course in all his seven rides over the enormous Aintree fences, will be on board Rinsus, generally on offer at 15-2, as the jockey attempts to repeat his 1984 win on Halo Dandy. Especially prepared for this year's race, the 10-year-old found the ground too firm when third to Mr Frisk last year. Mr Frisk needs firm going, Rinsus wants it soft.

"Everything's going well and the horse is in great shape," Richardson went on. "All we need is some decent ground."

No jockey has yet been booked for The Langholm Dyer, who ran more than respectably when fourth to Omerta at Cheltenham. "I'd like to put up Liam O'Hara, who rides him in most of his races, but the owners may want someone more experienced," said Richardson.

Omerta, the easy winner of Cheltenham, is owned by Kym Muir Chase at Cheltenham, but not accompanied his stable companion Bonanza Boy at Liverpool. "As we are not running Aqueduct at Fairbury, we are now sending Omerta over for the Irish National on Monday," said Martin Pipe yesterday. Ladbroke bet on the Irish National: 1-10, 2-10, 3-10, 4-10, 5-10, 6-10, 7-10, 8-10, 9-10, 10-10.

Selections	
By Mandarin	By Thunderer
2.00 Silver Dilemma	2.00 Silver Dilemma
2.30 Calachachi	2.30 Rinsus
3.00 Al Shany	3.00 Tiger Claw
3.30 Mistified	3.30 Mistified
4.00 Full Cry	4.00 Full Cry
4.30 Auldake	4.30 Sleeping Fantasy

Michael Seely's selection: 2.00 Silver Dilemma.
The Times Private Handicapper's top rating: 2.30 JOKERS PATCH.
By Our Newmarket Correspondent
3.00 EVERY ONE A GEM (nsp). 4.00 Full Cry. 4.30 Beechwood Cottage.

Going: good to firm	
2.0 CHURCHILL SQUARE MAIDEN (3-Y-O: 22.774: 6) (14 runners)	
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5 (5) 2.00 CHURCHILL SQUARE MAIDEN (3-Y-O: 22.774: 6) (14 runners)	
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FORM FOCUS	
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Selections	
By Mandarin	By Thunderer
2.15 Sutton Lane	2.15 Sutton Lane
2.45 Trojan Pleasure	2.45 Trojan Pleasure
3.15 Out of Stock	3.15 Out of Stock
3.45 Free Justice	3.45 Free Justice
4.15 JOHN SAM (nsp)	4.15 JOHN SAM (nsp)
4.45 Rubus Boy	4.45 Rubus Boy
5.15 Timber Tool	5.15 Timber Tool

Michael Seely's selection: 4.15 John Sam.
By Brian Beel
4.15 John Sam. 5.15 Peppy.

Going: good to firm patches	
2.15 TAUNTON NOVICES HURDLE (E1,839: 2m 110yds) (14 runners)	
1 (1) 2.15 TAUNTON NOVICES HURDLE (E1,839: 2m 110yds) (14 runners)	
2 (2) 2.15 TAUNTON NOVICES HURDLE (E1,839: 2m 110yds) (14 runners)	
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2.45 CROCOMBE NOVICES HURDLE (E1,839: 2m 110yds) (runners)	
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14 (14) 2.45 CROCOMBE NOVICES HURDLE (E1,839: 2m 110yds) (runners)	

1	430480	SPITFIRE SEAS GSF (5/20/9) P (Burke) R Hong 5-11		
2		FOLLOW THE SEAS GSF (5/20/9) P (Burke) R Hong 5-11		
3		HEARTY COTTON (4/20/9) P (Shane) M Adams 5-11		L Denny
4		ROYAL ALASKA (3/20/9) P (O'Brien) P Hughes 5-11		L Denny
5	535841	PUMPKINHEAD GRAYBEE GSF (5/20/9) P (Burke) R Hong 5-11		Dale Williams
6		CREEPYZEE (4/20/9) S (Burke) W Muir 5-10-10		W Richards
7		KASHMIR WIND GSF (5/20/9) D Bosley 5-10-10		W Richards
8		COMBINATION (4/20/9) P (Burke) R Hong 5-11		A Terry
9		PCBT CODE 7 (3/20/9) P (Compton) D Fisher 4-10-7		W McFarland
10	53	BEACHPEYLS (3/10/9) R (Hewitt) R Houston 4-10-2		W McFarland
11	50	SEA RIDGE (3/10/9) P (Hewitt) R Houston 4-10-2		B Powell
12		SABURA DANCER (5/20/9) C (Hart) J Bradley 4-10-2		D Tress
				W Richards

CRICKET

Australia in peril after the strange dismissal of Jones

From JOHN WOODCOCK IN GEORGETOWN, GUYANA

AUSTRALIA were hurried on their way to impending defeat, or so it seemed, in the second Test match here yesterday by an incident the like of which I have never seen before. The victim was Dean Jones, whose "dismissal" reduced Australia, needing 221 to make West Indies bat again, to 73 for four. Half an hour after tea they were 130 for five.

Jones had his middle stump knocked back by Walsh and walked smartly off towards the pavilion, his bat under his arm. What he had not heard was umpire Duncan's call of no-ball. From Walsh's wild gesticulations to someone near the wicket to pick up the ball and pull out a stump, so running Jones out, it was abundantly clear that he had. Greenidge obliged — and although by then Jones was abreast of what was happening and attempted to regain his ground, he was too late to do so.

In fact this should not have mattered. As, in two instances, the laws make perfectly clear, Jones was not out anyway. First, Law 27 (5): "The umpires shall intervene if satisfied that a batsman, not having been given out, has left his wicket under a misapprehension that he has been dismissed. And now Law 38 (2): "If a no-ball has been called, the striker shall not be

given run out unless he attempts to run."

Nothing could be clearer. But here we had not one but two umpires who didn't know the laws. Nor for that matter can Border, the non-striker, have done so, or he would surely have cited them; nor did the majority of those in the press box nor of those in the Australian dressing-room.

Having been furnished with them, the umpires were asked during the tea interval by Bobby Simpson, the Australian coach, whether they could see their way to reinstating Jones. Although there is nothing in the laws to prevent it, they declined — and there, for the moment, the matter rests.

The best analogy that I can think of was at Port of Spain in 1973-74 when the umpires in the second Test match between England and West Indies allowed Alvin Kallicharran to bat again next morning after he had been given run out off the last ball of the previous day. To put it no more strongly, England, in the person of Tony Greig, had been guilty then of gamesmanship. But no one else had begun an innings whereas yesterday by the time the umpires were approached, Mark Waugh was 10 not out. I was one of a small minority, I think, but I thought Messrs

Duncan and Cumberbatch should have admitted their error and, with Richards's consent, have allowed Jones to come in later.

Bowling very straight and just short of a length the West Indian quartet of fast bowlers were an entirely different proposition from the Australian attack which, first thing in the day, had taken 40 minutes to separate the last West Indian pair. The pitch is worn and not noticeably flat, and in such conditions Ambrose and the others were always going to set Australia's batsmen the sternest of tests.

Richards had chosen to continue the West Indies first innings from Monday's 513 for nine, not so as to be able to use the heavy roller but for the 37 runs which, in the event, Marshall and Patterson collected between them. He would seem to be of the school of thought, common in Pakistan, that heavy rollers do more to deaden pitches than damage them. Yesterday Richards had no roller at all. Border, on the other hand, ordered the heavy one when Patterson was leg before to Matthew.

The crowd which watched Australia set off on their uncertain journey, was perhaps 3,000, the smallest of the four days. The weather was overcast and steamier than before, and Australia were soon hoping, albeit vainly, for rain. Although Patterson found no rhythm, Ambrose did, and it was he who had Taylor leg before to a ball that kept low. That was in the eleventh over, just before lunch. Two overs into the afternoon, Boon was caught at the wicket, low down off a Marshall outswinger. At 67 Marsh, pulling uncharacteristically at Walsh, was bowled — and, almost immediately, came the Jones affair.

AUSTRALIA: First innings 248 (38 R Marsh 84, M Waugh 71, A Healy 63; B P Patterson 4 for 60).

WEST INDIES: First innings 200 (D L Haynes 68, M D Matthews 111, R B Richardson 84, C G Greenidge 54, C L Hooper 54, W A Richards 50, A L Lough 49, M B Border 29, M J Marshall 22, C E Llewellyn 10, C J McDermott 0, B P Patterson 10, M G Hughes 15, Extras (p 5, b 15, nb 23) 53. Total 559. FALL OF WICKETS: 1-10, 2-30, 3-38, 4-43, 5-44, 6-52, 7-53, 8-53, 9-52. BOWLING: McDermott 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Waugh 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Marsh 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Healy 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Patterson 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Hughes 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Matthews 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Llewellyn 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Richardson 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Haynes 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Greenidge 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Hooper 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Richards 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Lough 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Border 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Marshall 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Llewellyn 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); McDermott 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Patterson 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Hughes 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Matthews 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Llewellyn 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Richardson 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Haynes 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Greenidge 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Hooper 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Richards 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Lough 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Border 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Marshall 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Llewellyn 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); McDermott 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Patterson 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Hughes 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Matthews 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Llewellyn 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Richardson 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); Haynes 10-0-0-0 (pb 11); 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